スキエンティア Scientia

戸田誠二

戸田誠二 Profile

1969年静岡県生まれ。アフタヌーン四季賞、小学館新人コミック大賞などの受賞歴を経て、1999年より自身のHP「COMPLEX POOL」にてオリジナル短編漫画の無料公開を開始。「インディーズコミック」の地平を拓く。それらの作品を集めた『生きるススメ』（虫出版）で単行本デビュー。以降、『しあわせ』『ストーリー』『説得ゲーム』（虫出版）『明う骨』『化けの皮』（ぶんか社）『美咲ヶ丘 1st』全2巻（小学館）を刊行、ヒューマンコミックの名手として確固たる地位を築く。本作『スキエンティア』は2008年より『ビッグコミックスピリッツ』誌にてシリーズ連載、その第1話『ボディレンタル』はフジテレビ『世にも奇妙な物語』にてドラマ化された。

BIG SPIRITS COMICS SPECIAL

スキエンティア Scientia

戸田誠二

ヒューマンSFシリーズ

小学館

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雑誌 45781-06　小学館

自殺願望のある女が、車椅子の老婆に身体をレンタルする「ボディレンタル」。飲ませた相手に必ず惚れられるクスリ「媚薬」。母親が死んだ娘のクローンを育てる「クローン」。愛が見えるど噂のドラッグを女子高生が求める「ドラッグ」。それを使うと誰もが天才になれる「覚醒機」他、「禁断の科学」にすがり己の人生を一変させたいと願う者たちを描く、ヒューマンSFシリーズ全7編。

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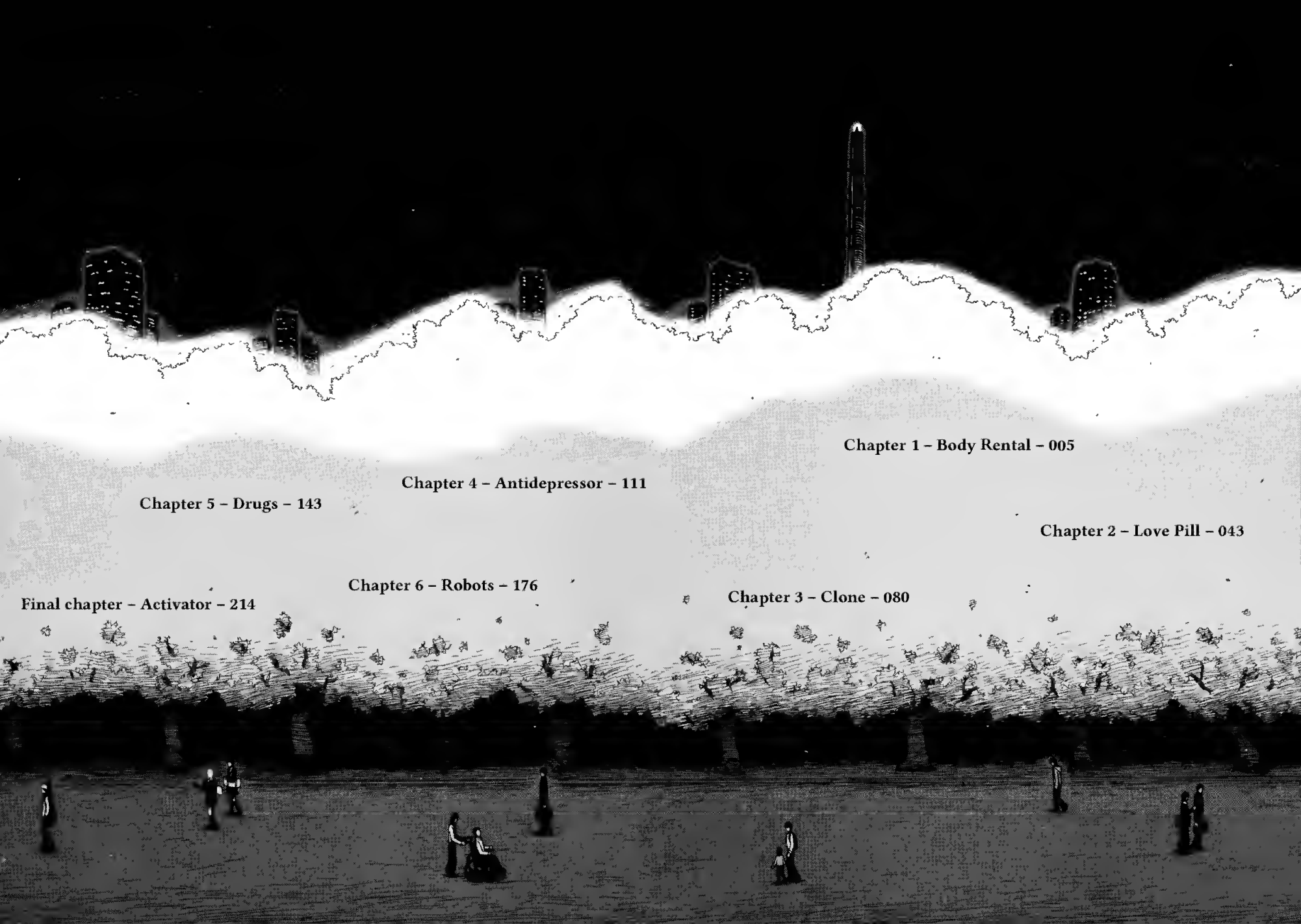
Toda Seiji



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Chapter 1 – Body Rental

24News
cientia one year anniversary
THE SCIENTIA TOWER CELEBRATES ITS FIRST ANNIVERSARY.
NEXT IN THE NEWS...
IS OF THE GODDESS THAT IS CALLED SCIENTIA.
AS MOST PEOPLE ARE AWARE, THE STATUE THAT STANDS AT THE TOP OF THIS HIGH-RISE TOWER THAT SYMBOLIZES OUR MODERN ERA,
click
bling
LOOPLE
Search results
suicide
LOOOOOO
click
suic
Search
click click
click
suicide
Search
click

click click
Looking for a candidate who wants to commit suicide!
Women, 18 to 24 years of age
Second Cybernetics Corp.
click click
click
Age: 18 to 24
Height: 160
Weight: 4
...BUT I MEET THE CRITERIA.
THE DEAD-LINE IS...
TODAY, HUH...
deadline:
x month
x day
IT'S SUSPI-CIOUS ...
More information:
• You will be providing medical support for a quadriplegic woman
• The job will be for three months
• No work experience or academic background necessary
• There is no mental or physical labor
• You will be highly compensated
• Especially looking for candidates who want to commit suicide

I am a quadriplegic w
I am seriously trouble
Please help me
Thank you
COULD IT NOT ALSO BE SAID IT HAS WHITTLED AWAY OUR RESPECT TOWARDS NATURE?
SCIENCE HAS MADE OUR DAILY LIVES EASIER, BUT
.....
...SCIENTIA, HER NAME MEANS "KNOWLEDGE", AND ALSO "GODDESS OF SCIENCE".
I am seriously troubled by
Please help me.
ntia one year anniversa
...SCIENTIA.
THE GODDESS WARNS US EVERY DAY
OF BECOMING TOO PROUD OF OUR TECHNO-LOGY.
LOOKING DOWN AT US FROM THE SKY AND WATCHING OVER OUR ACTIONS.
click
ゴ

ringing
ringing
ringing
ringing
YES ...?
AM I SPEAKING TO KAORI SHINOHARA?
MMM...
WE HAVE FINISHED SCREENING YOUR APPLICATION, AND WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO AN INTERVIEW.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR RESPONDING TO OUR RECRUIT-MENT AD.
MY NAME IS UENO, I'M FROM THE SECOND CYBERNETICS CORPORATION.
5
THE INTERVIEW WILL BE HELD ON THE 80TH FLOOR OF THE SCIENTIA TOWER.
PLEASE COME TO ROOM 8002.

...
I WAS PLANNING ON DYING.
...WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING?
...WHERE'S DAD?
I DON'T KNOW.
I DON'T KNOW.
...MOM, WHAT'S FOR DINNER?
WHEN MY FATHER LEFT,
WITH SOME WOMAN, PROBABLY.

I QUIT HIGH SCHOOL.
MOM.
I'M GOING NOW.
ヒック
ドサ
MY MOTHER STARTED BRINGING MEN HOME.
BYE.
ヒック
I SEE.
I'M HOME.
swipe swipe
swipe swipe
ゴシ ゴシ

DID YOU GET THE JOB?
HOW WAS THE INTER-VIEW?
.....
tap tap
I TOLD YOU TO LEAVE ME BE FOR A WHILE!
...YOU'RE ANNOY-ING!
YO.
tap tap
JUST LOOKING AT YOU IS PISSING ME OFF!
YOU'RE NOT MY MOTHER, YOU KNOW!
BLAH BLAH BLAH.
BUT...
I WONDER IF MY PARENTS ABANDONED ME BECAUSE I'M LIKE THIS, TOO.
ONE DAY, HE WAS GONE TOO.

TOUGH TO TRY WHEN YOU HAVE NO DREAMS.
IT'S JUST SO...
Swipe Swipe
TIRED OF IT.
I'M JUST SO...
...WHATEVER. IT DOESN'T MATTER.
AT LEAST I CAN HELP SOMEONE BEFORE I DIE.
ゴ"
ゴ"

IT'S AMAZ-ING...
HARD TO BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE LIVE IN PLACES LIKE THIS TOO.

OKAY...
MISS KAORI SHINOHARA, RIGHT?
THIS WAY, PLEASE.
NICE TO MEET YOU.
I AM THE CLIENT. MY NAME IS ENDO.
ARE YOU SURPRISED TO FIND THAT I'M AN OLD, GRAY WOMAN?

WE WANT TO RENT YOUR BODY.
SO, TO EXPLAIN YOUR JOB DESCRIPTION SIMPLY,
IN OTHER WORDS, HER BODY WILL REMAIN HERE
WHILE SHE IS MOVING YOUR BODY AROUND OUTSIDE.
BY TRANSMITTING MS. ENDO'S BRAIN WAVES,
SHE WILL HAVE CONTROL OF YOUR SENSORY AND MOTOR NERVES.
WE WILL PERFORM AN OPERATION TO PLACE A RECEIVER IN THE BACK OF YOUR NECK.
YOU CAN SPEAK WITH YOUR MOUTH AND CONVEY YOUR INTENT.
IF THERE ARE TIMES WHEN YOU HAVE SOMETHING YOU WANT TO SAY,
FOR YOU, IT'LL BE LIKE WATCHING A REAL-LIFE MOVIE.
YOU WILL ONLY SHARE THE USE OF YOUR EYES, EARS AND MOUTH.
YOU WILL NOT HAVE ANY SENSATION FROM YOUR BODY.

FROM HERE ON, I'LL JUST SPEAK MY MIND.
ENOUGH, I'LL DO THE REST OF THE TALKING.
MS. ENDO'S LIMBS ARE PARALYZED AND...
UMM, THE REASON WE ARE IN THIS SITUATION IS THAT...
HAHA, MY BODY BECAME LIKE THIS BECAUSE
AFTER THAT, I WORKED LIKE CRAZY.
I OVER-WORKED IT.
MY PARENTS WERE LOUSY DRUNKARDS, SO I LEFT HOME LONG AGO.
I BUILT THAT COMPANY.
ALTHOUGH I'M RETIRED NOW.
MS. SHINO-HARA.
DO YOU KNOW THE IT COMPANY WENDY? THEIR OFFICE IS IN THIS BUILDING.
BUT...
Wendy
入社式
AND EVEN NOW, I'M LIVING WITHOUT DIS-COMFORT.
MY COMPANY WAS SUC-CESSFUL,
BUT I DON'T REGRET DOING IT.

I CAME DOWN WITH THIS ILLNESS IN MY PRIME, HALFWAY IN MY FORTIES.
ALTHOUGH I DID MENTAL WORK, I STILL WANT TO MOVE MY BODY,
SINCE I JUST DON'T KNOW HOW TO RELAX.
IF I COULD HAVE ONE WISH GRANTED,
I WANT TO TRY WORKING USING ARMS AND LEGS OF LIVING FLESH JUST ONE MORE TIME.
I HAVE NO HUSBAND OR CHILDREN.
WHEN I WAS YOUNG I WORKED TOO HARD AND BECAME BARREN.
...ALL I HAVE LEFT FOR ME IS WORK.
BUT IF YOU'RE GOING TO KILL YOURSELVES WHILE YOU'RE HEALTHY,
AT LEAST LEND ME YOUR BODY BEFORE YOU DIE.
HONESTLY, I DON'T CARE IF YOU KIDS ARE GOING TO COMMIT SUICIDE.
14
JUST LET ME DO IT!
IF I CAN WORK AGAIN, I CAN DIE SATISFIED!
YOU WILL RECEIVE A COMPENSATION OF THIRTY MILLION YEN.
NO, I DON'T MIND PAYING YOU MORE.
ギン

I GOT A LITTLE OVER-EXCITED.
...PARDON ME.
.....
WELL, THE OPERATION ISN'T 100% SAFE.
PLEASE RESPOND BY NEXT WEEK...
I'LL DO IT.
YOU'LL PROBABLY WANT TO THINK ABOUT IT FOR A WHILE.
15
THERE'S NOTHING FOR ME TO LOSE, REALLY...
IF IT COMES DOWN TO MY DECISION,
THEN I'LL DO IT.
GREAT! IT'S DECIDED!
I KNEW YOU'D BE A GOOD CHOICE!
HAVING THE SAME BODY TYPE AS MINE WAS A REQUIREMENT,
BUT YOU'VE GOT BIG BREASTS TOO!
AHA HAHA HA...

ピッピッピッ
シュコ
シュコ
IT'S BEEN OVER SEVEN HOURS.
MS. SHINOHARA, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT LYING FACE-DOWN?
PLEASE SAY SOMETHING IF YOU'RE NOT FEELING WELL.
...OKAY.
PUSH IT IN LIKE THAT.
GOOD. NEXT, THE SUTURING.
GOOD, IT'S CONNECTED.
WE'LL IMPLANT IT IN YOUR NECK.

hmmm...
HE HE...
HEH ...
EH? I DON'T KNOW WHERE MY MOUTH IS...
17
YOUR CONCEN-TRATION IS AMAZING.
WELL... YOU'RE DEFINITELY IMPROVING.
Slurp
Tremble

WELL, THAT'LL BE IT FOR TODAY.
Click
Click
Click
hummm...
YOU WERE ABLE TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO SPEAK QUICKLY TOO.
HAHA, IF I TAKE IT SLOWLY, I'LL RUN OUT OF TIME.
AHA HAHA
THEN YOU SHOULD BE READY NEXT MONTH.
I SURE HOPE SO.
HOW ARE YOU FEELING, MS. SHINOHARA? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
ガラ
Click
...YEAH, I REALLY ONLY HAVE MY EYES, EARS, AND MOUTH WHEN SHE'S ONLINE,
SO IT FEELS LIKE WATCHING A REAL-LIFE MOVIE, BUT
ONCE YOU TURN THE SWITCH OFF AND I GET MY BODY BACK I FIND MYSELF EXHAUSTED...
YOU MUSTN'T OVEREXERT YOURSELF EITHER, MS. ENDO.
HMPH,
WHEN YOU USE YOUR BRAIN, YOUR HEART RATE BACK HERE GOES UP.
BUT THE FUN PART IS JUST ABOUT TO START.

...SHE'S ONE ENERGETIC OLO LAOY.
I WON'T DROP DEAD HERE.
hah
hah
hah
Yes, I've mastered using chopsticks too! ((
One more!
...YOUR MEMORIES ARE BEING TOO KIND TO YOU!
I WAS MUCH THINNER WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE!
WHAT DID YOU SAY!?
H-HOW RUDE! I DON'T HAVE THAT MUCH!
BUT YOU ALSO HAVE MEAT ON YOUR BELLY, DON'T YOU?
...YOU HAVE A BIG CHEST,

...HMM,
ARE YOU GOING TO WORK AT THIS COMPANY, MS. ENDO?
YEAH, DESPITE BEING A RECENTLY ESTABLISHED IT FIRM,
THEIR WAY OF THINKING IS INTERESTING.
BESIDES, THE CEO RESEMBLES MY FIRST LOVE.
MS. ENDO,
YOU CERTAINLY ARE A WOMAN ...
WELL, OF COURSE!
代表取締役社長
FINALLY,
hah
hah
hah
hah
IT'S TIME.
TO HAVE SOME FUN!

EXCUSE ME!
I REQUESTED AN INTERVIEW A FEW DAYS AGO.
MY NAME IS SHINOHARA!
HMM ...
JUST ONE MONTH...
YES, I'M AFRAID SO.
BUT I WANT TO WORK HERE!
HMMM, IF IT WAS FOR A BIT LONGER...
Stare
CHIEF!
I'M WELL WORTH HIRING!!
ALTHOUGH I LOOK YOUNG, I'M AN EXPERT IN THE IT BUSINESS WORLD
WORTH DOUBLE MY SALARY! TRIPLE!
NO, I'LL WORK EVEN MORE THAN THAT!
21

Sizzle
Sizzle
HA HAH, THE BOSS WAS REALLY SURPRISED.
BUT I CAN'T LIVE ON MY OWN LIKE THIS ANYMORE.
Sizzle
OR COOK FOR MYSELF.
...YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO OUT OF YOUR WAY TO LIVE IN MY APARTMENT, MS. ENDO.
EVEN SO, CLEANING YOUR ROOM WAS A PAIN.
WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I LIVED IN A MUCH MORE MISERABLE PLACE,
AND ATE MUCH WORSE.
...SORRY.
Sizzle
...NOT AT ALL.
MOVING THESE ARMS, THESE LEGS...
IS FANTASTIC.
THANK YOU.

HEY, SHINO-HARA!
SHINO-HARA!
YES?
CAN YOU COME OVER HERE FOR A BIT?
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS?
AH,
IN THIS CASE...
One more push!

MS. ENDO, COULD YOU LOOK AT THE MIRROR AGAIN?
?
ス
...WAIT A SECOND!
Squeak
24
?
ヒチャ

...AMAZING.
MY FACE IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM BEFORE.
?
SORRY, THAT'S ENOUGH.
YOU'RE AMAZING, MS. ENDO.
THINGS LIKE THAT CHANGE TOO, IF YOU CHANGE WHAT'S INSIDE.
MORN-ING!
OH, GOOD MORNING!
IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE TO LIVE SO HAPPILY WITH OTHER PEOPLE LIKE THIS,
HEHE HE.
YOU'RE ALWAYS EARLY, EH?
JUST BY CHANGING WHAT'S ON THE INSIDE...?

I WAS THE PROBLEM ALL ALONG...
...I GUESS IT WAS ME.

IT WAS ONLY FOR A SHORT WHILE, BUT...
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
THERE'S NO WAY THAT YOU CAN STAY, IS THERE...?
...IT'S A SHAME, IT REALLY IS.
CHIEF, THIS IS A GOOD COMPANY.
PLEASE CONTINUE TO SUCCEED!
...CHIEF, A LAST INDULGENCE, IF I MAY,
PLEASE WALK ME TO THE STATION.
HUH?
...SURE.

ゴ
LEAVE IT TO ME!
SURE!
CHIEF.
PLEASE MAKE IT INTO THAT TOWER AFTER THIS.
ゴ——
ブDDD--
I SEE.
WELL, I'LL TAKE MY LEAVE HERE.
CHIEF ...
LET ME HAVE ONE MORE THING.
THANK YOU!

...AHH,
THIS IS ENOUGH.
THIS IS ENOUGH...
...EH?
...HUH?
THANK YOU SO MUCH!
GOODBYE!

WELCOME BACK.
WELCOME BACK.
WELCOME BACK.
...I'M BACK.
...OKAY, I'M TURNING IT OFF.
YEAH.
ギシ
Click
Click
hummmm...
Phew...
ズナ

... IT'S SO HEAVY. HOW HARD DID SHE WORK MY BODY!?
...Ms. Endo?
WHOA!
WHAT...?
MS. ENDO!
MS. ENDO?
MS. ENDO!!
MS. ENDO!

THE ECG IS LOOKING NORMAL...
MS. ENDO!!
MS. ENDO...
...OH. PLEASE DON'T SCARE US LIKE THAT.
LET ME SAVOR THE MEMORIES FOR A BIT!
.....
...YOU'RE SO NOISY.
...WELL,
THESE THREE MONTHS
WERE FUN.
BUT, MY OWN BODY IS THE BEST FOR ME AFTER ALL.
HAHA, THIS BODY THAT I SHOULD HOLD DEAR,
THAT I'VE WORN TO THE BONE.

MS. SHINO-HARA,
THANK YOU.
KAORI, YOU DO IT TOO.
DO IT.
YOU CAN.
...IF YOU HAVE PROB-LEMS,
YOU CAN COME TO ME THIS TIME.

RIGHT, KAORI?
...YEAH.

I... I SAW YOUR RECRUIT-MENT AD AND..
AH, HELLO?
Help wanted
haaaaa
hoooooooo
haaaaa
...LET'S DO THIS!
Tap Tap
35
Shut
AN INTERVIEW TODAY?
OH, THAT'S NO PROBLEM.

I'LL BE BACK LATER!

Chapter 2 – Love Drug

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HEY KUBO, CAN I LEAVE THAT TASK TO YOU?
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS ONE.
SURE THING.
THIS IS ANOTHER BOTHERSOME TASK...
THE SECTION CHIEF IS GOING TO PROMISE TO GET IT DONE WITHOUT THINKING AGAIN.
TELL HIM IF YOU CAN'T DO IT SO HE CAN GIVE IT TO SOMEONE ELSE.
NO, I'LL DEFINITELY TAKE CARE OF IT...
tap
RE-FRESH-MENTS!
LET'S CELEBRATE ONCE THIS PROJECT IS DONE.
THANK YOU.
...YEAH,
I KNEW SHE'D BE THE RIGHT ONE.

I'M SORRY THAT THERE'S NO END TO YOUR OVERTIME WORK.
NOT AT ALL. YOU'RE THE CUSTOMER, AFTER ALL.
SO,
THIS IS THE "LOVE DRUG".
IT TAKES EFFECT IMMEDIATELY.
YOUR HEART RATE GOES UP,
YOU FEEL A SURGE OF EXCITEMENT,
AND YOUR MIND AND BODY WILL BE IN A STATE OF AROUSAL.
AS SOON AS YOU TAKE IT, THE HORMONE DENSITY IN YOUR BRAIN INCREASES.
IN OTHER WORDS, THE PERSON WHO TAKES THIS WILL EXPERIENCE
THE INITIAL EXCITEMENT OF FALLING IN LOVE
TOWARDS WHOMEVER THEY'RE THINKING OF, OR RATHER, WHOMEVER THEY ARE WITH.

I HOPE THAT'S TRUE.
I NEED IT TO BE VERY EFFECTIVE.
I ENDED UP HERE BASED ON WHAT I HEARD AND READ ON THE NET.
IT'S NOT CHEAP EITHER, IF IT'S A FAKE, THEN...
THE THING IS,
LOVE DRUGS
AREN'T THAT COMPLICATED.
CHANGING PEOPLE'S FEELINGS WITH MEDICATION IS PRETTY EASY.
WELL, THAT'S WHY IT'S FORBIDDEN.
4
HOWEVER,
.....
ANYWAY, THE LONGEST YOU CAN MAINTAIN THAT FEELING OF EXCITEMENT IS FOR TWO YEARS.
CONSUMING THE DRUG FOR LONGER THAN THAT WON'T BE HEALTHY.
AFTER THAT, THE HUMAN BODY WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE ABLE TO EVEN OUT THE EXCITEMENT.

IT WON'T WORK IF ALL YOU DO IS CREATE THE EMOTIONS.
YOU NEED SOME REAL ACTION SOMEWHERE TOO.
AFTER ALL, MEDICATION CAN'T CREATE TRUST.
IF YOU WANT TO CONTINUE THAT RELATIONSHIP,
YOU SHOULD BUILD A MUTUAL TRUST
WHILE THE EXCITEMENT LASTS.
WHETHER IT LASTS OR NOT IS UP TO THE PERSON IN QUESTION.
IN OTHER WORDS, ALTHOUGH THE MEDICATION WILL MAKE ANYONE FALL IN LOVE,
5
USUALLY, YOU GIVE THIS TO THE PERSON YOU LIKE
TO MAKE THEM FALL IN LOVE WITH YOU.
...AL-THOUGH, IN YOUR CASE,
THINGS ARE A BIT DIFFERENT.

MIHASHI DRUGSTORE
FOR SOMEONE TO TAKE IT THEMSELVES LIKE YOU.
IT'S QUITE UNUSUAL
IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO DATE GIRLS.
...I GUESS THAT'S TRUE.
コッ
コッ
コッ
Thanks for coming
MIHASHI DRUGSTORE
...I WENT OUT WITH SEVERAL.
...BUT THEY ALL GOT REALLY BOTHER-SOME.
ARE YOU LISTEN-ING?
MMM.

blip
NO. I THINK WE SHOULD BREAK UP TOO.
...YEAH. IT'S FINE.
IT'S NEVER EVEN LASTED A YEAR.
tap
Udon!
Udon!
THERE WAS ONE GIRL WHO ABSOLUTELY REFUSED TO EAT SOBA.
WHO KNOWS WHY...
...OH YEAH,
slide
SOBA
SHI-ZOKU
IT'S SO MUCH EASIER TO BE SINGLE.
AHH,
I CAN TAKE MY TIME READING BOOKS.
AND USE ALL MY TIME AND MONEY ON MYSELF.
New

PLASTIC MODELS, EH.
I USED TO LOVE THEM AS A KID.
!!!
おもちゃ
thud
...IT'S NOT LIKE
...BUT I'M SURE,
GUNDAM
GUNDAM
TEN
THERE'S ANYTHING THAT I REALLY WANT TO DO WHILE I'M SINGLE.

THAT I ALSO HAD TIMES
WHEN I WAS COMPLETELY ENTRANCED BY SOMETHING IN THE PAST.
...I WANT TO FALL IN LOVE WITH A PERSON
AND FEEL LIKE THAT.
I WANT TO BE SENSELESSLY IN LOVE.

WHEW.
GOOD WORK.
And so
A FRIEND TOLD ME ABOUT THIS PLACE.
I WANTED TO COME HERE AT LEAST ONCE.
...SHE DID SAY THAT SHE BROKE UP WITH A MAN SOME TIME AGO.
WHAT DO YOU THINK, IT'S A PRETTY NICE PLACE, RIGHT?
SURE...
BUT IT'S NOT ALL THAT EXPENSIVE.
LET'S DRINK TONIGHT!
AH, OKAY.
AH, NO, I'M FINE.
I'M JUST GOING TO USE THE REST-ROOM.
clatter
...ARE YOU ALRIGHT, KUBO?
DO YOU FEEL ILL?
DO I TAKE IT AFTER I ASK HER TO GO OUT WITH ME?
NO, SHOULD I TAKE IT FIRST AND THEN ASK?
...WHAT SHOULD I DO?
WHEN SHOULD I TAKE THE DRUG?
10

TOILET
Creak
tmp
Sigh...
11
pop
pop
ブーン
ブーン

GODDESS OF SCIENCE.
I BEG YOU,
SQUISH
SQUISH
SQUISH
SQUISH
SQUISH
...SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.

ドド
ドキ
ドッ
ドッ
ドッ
……?
WHAT'S WRONG?
AH...
NO...
...UMM,
...GO FOR IT! SAY IT!

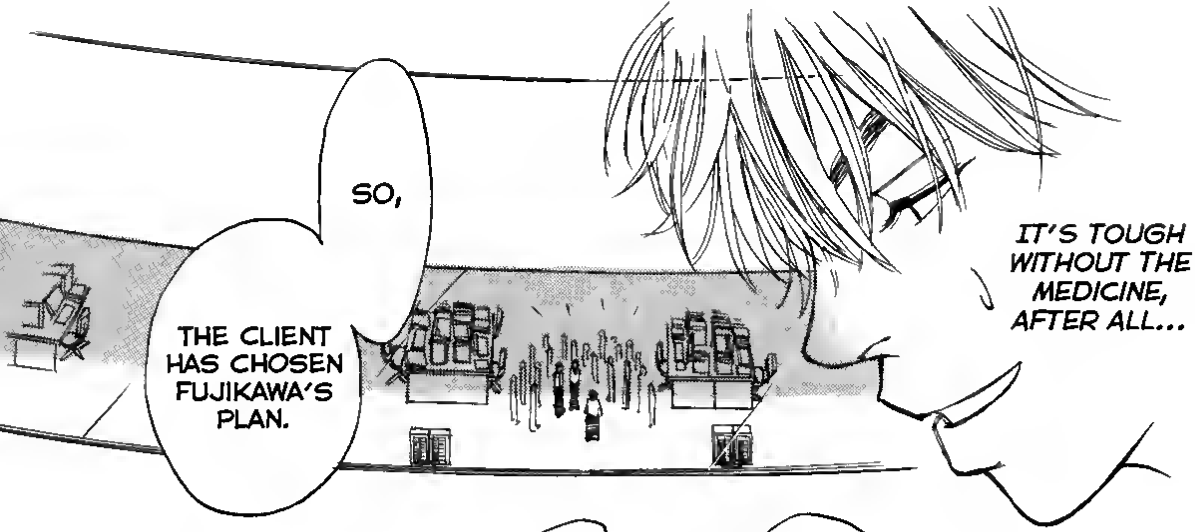
FUJIKAWA!
I LIKE YOU!
WILL YOU GO OUT WITH ME!?
ゴ
ゴoooo..
Heeey!
THUMP
THUMP
UHH...

KUBO, YOU SEEM WAY MORE EXCITED THAN YOU DO AT WORK...
...FUJIKAWA, YOU LOOK SO CUTE IN YOUR REGULAR CLOTHES!
REALLY CUTE!
15
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.
WOOOW!
...AMAZ-ING.
BECAUSE YOU'RE CUTE!
NO WAY!!
...YOU AREN'T TRYING TO BUTTER ME UP TO GET ME TO DO SOME WORK FOR YOU, ARE YOU?
OKAY THEN...
Kubo?
THIS IS HOW IT IS TO LIKE SOMEONE?
...I CAN'T
PAY ATTENTION TO THE MOVIE...

KUBO, YOU CAN STAY AT MY PLACE IF YOU'RE WORKING LATE.
IT'S NEAR THE OFFICE.
SURE.
IT'S LIKE I'M DREAM-ING...
GOOD WORK!
ALL RIGHT,
コト
kiss

WHAT IS THIS SHEER HAPPINESS?
...INCRE-DIBLE.
I FEEL LIKE I'M GOING TO CRY.

WAKE UP!
WHAT?
WH... WHAT?
...EH?
KUBO, YOU GOTTA WAKE UP.
MMM...
..G-GOOD MORNING.
I... I'LL GO WASH MY FACE.
OKAY.
snap
snap
...FOR A MOMENT THERE,
SHE LOOKED LIKE AN AVERAGE GIRL...
gulp


SO,
THE CLIENT HAS CHOSEN FUJIKAWA'S PLAN.
IT'S TOUGH WITHOUT THE MEDICINE, AFTER ALL...

YEAAA
H!
ALL RIGHT!
ACCORDINGLY, THE MANAGER OF THIS PROJECT WILL BE FUJIKAWA!
THE DEPUTY MANAGER WILL BE KUBO!
IT'S A LOT OF WORK, YOU'RE GOING TO BE BUSY. I'M COUNTING ON YOU.

19

NO TIME FOR DATING...
N-
...LET'S!
LET'S WORK HARD!

DAMN IT... LET THIS DAY END FAST,
SO I CAN BE WITH HER...
SORRY KUBO, HELP OUT WITH THAT TASK!
OKAY!
LET'S DO SOME-THING TO-GETHER.
UMM... HOW ABOUT WE, UH...
I DON'T THINK I CAN...
EH?
H?
I'M DONE!
I'M GOING TO BED EARLY.
...EH?
WHEW... GOOD WORK...
Zzzz
LIKE...
ERR, ABOUT ANY-THING...
HUH?
HOW ABOUT WE TALK OR SOME-THING THEN...
AH, UMM, WELL,
...SURE, OKAY... ABOUT WHAT?

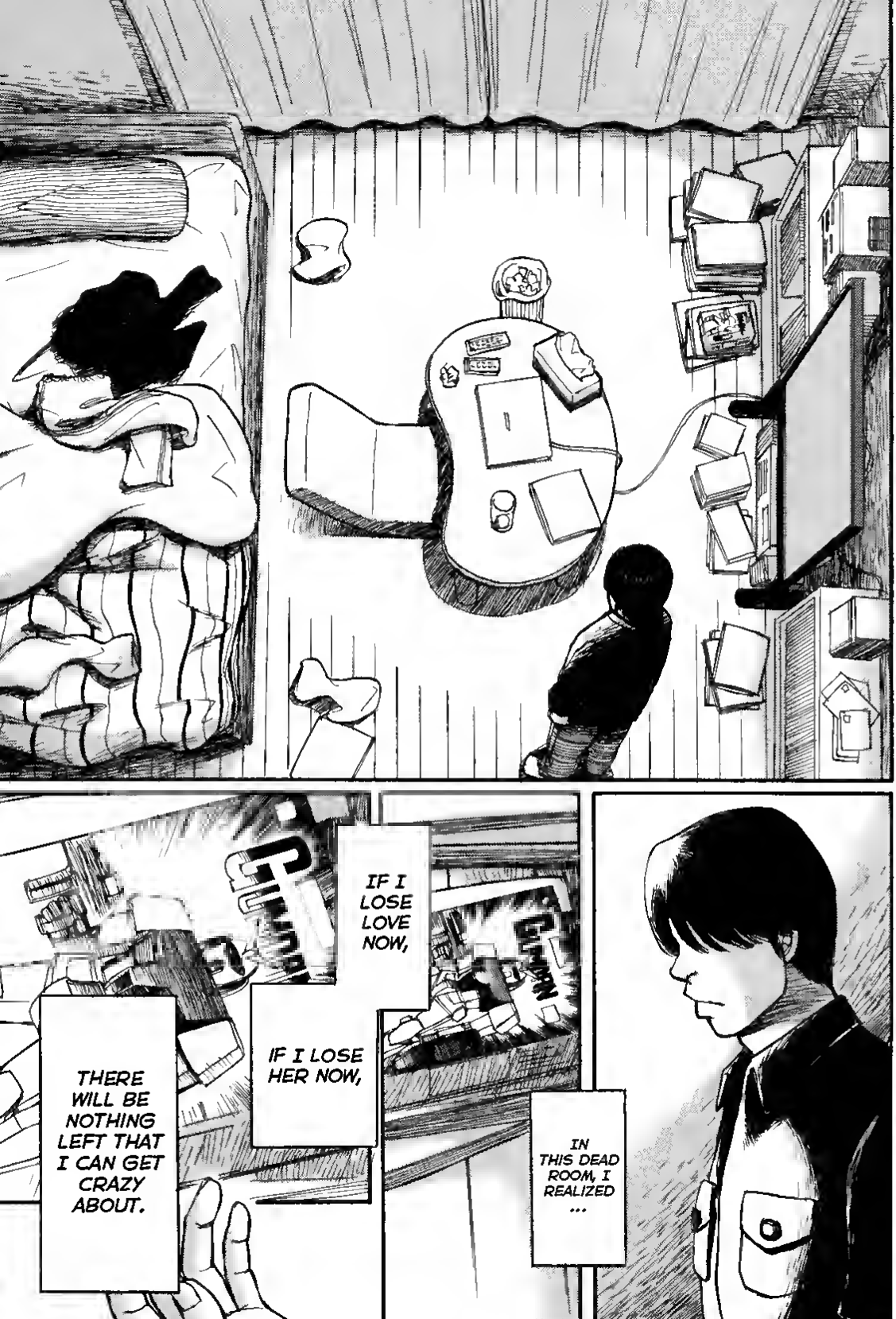
OH, COME ON!
WE DON'T HAVE ANY TIME TOGETHER LIKE THIS!
...NOT POINT-LESS, BUT...
CAN'T HELP IT THOUGH, SINCE IT IS HER PLAN...
I get to see her smiling too...
LET'S DO OUR BEST.
GOOD WORK.
YES!
Hey, Fuji-kawa!
WHICH MEANS TAKING THE MEDICINE IS...
tap
I WONDER IF IT'LL HAPPEN AGAIN TODAY...
Chatter
SEEMS LIKE IT WILL...

I-I'M SORRY!
Fujikawa?
YOU'RE THE DEPUTY MANAGER, SO BE CAREFUL!
KUBO, THERE'S A MISTAKE HERE!
HERE TOO!
AND HERE!
DAMN IT, I'M THINKING OF YOU,
SO I CAN'T CONCEN-TRATE!
Oh really?
HM?
Sigh
THAT WAS A CUS-TOMER!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, ARE YOU SAYING I'M CHEATING ON YOU!?
INSTEAD OF THINKING ABOUT THAT, YOU SHOULD TRY TO MAKE LESS MISTAKES AT WORK, SHINJI!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, TOMO!? IT'S ALWAYS WORK WITH YOU, YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT ME!
ギャー ギャー

...IT'S KIND OF
UN-SETTLING...
FINALLY, HOME-MADE FOOD AGAIN!
HERE WE GO!
WE'RE GONNA CONTINUE TO BE BUSY
YOU KNOW,
WITH WORK LIKE WE ARE NOW, RIGHT?
...SHE HAS SHADOWS UNDER HER EYES TOO.
...THANKS.

IS THAT ALL RIGHT WITH YOU?
WELL, THAT'S WORK.
WE COULD FIND EASIER WORK.
THAT'S HOW IT GOES.
WORKING HARD TOGETHER LIKE THIS ISN'T THAT BAD, IS IT?
...FOR ME, WORK IS JUST WORK.
BESIDES, I'M HAPPY THAT WE'RE WORKING TOGETHER.
IT'LL BE LIKE THIS WITH ANY JOB, IF YOU DO IT PROPERLY.
IN THE PAST, I GOT DUMPED BECAUSE I WAS TOO BUSY.
WHEREAS I ONLY HAVE HER...
...I ACHIEVED THAT BY MY OWN EFFORT!
...SO WHAT?
IT'S YOUR PLAN TOO.
...IT'S FINE FOR YOU.
IT MUST BE FUN.
YOU'VE ALWAYS LIKED WORK.
...THAT'S RIGHT, SHE'S BEING UNFAIR.
SHE HAS WORK AND LOVE.

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE MY FACE,
GO BACK TO YOUR OWN HOME!
...WHY HAVE YOU BEEN LASHING OUT LATELY!?
YOU'RE THE ONE THAT'S NOT ENJOYING IT, SHINJI!
SINCE YOU THINK YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS IT ROUGH!
Click
IT'S PAINFUL TO HAVE NO ONE.
IT'S PAINFUL TO HAVE SOMEONE.
Click
SO PAINFUL...
IT FEELS...
WHAT SHOULO I OO...


IN THIS DEAD ROOM, I REALIZED ...
IF I LOSE LOVE NOW,
IF I LOSE HER NOW,
THERE WILL BE NOTHING LEFT THAT I CAN GET CRAZY ABOUT.

I CARELESSLY DITCHED ALL THOSE OTHER GIRLS, DIDN'T I?
...I THOUGHT I DIDN'T WANT TO FEEL EMPTY LIKE THAT ANYMORE.
SINCE SHE WANTS TO WORK NOW.
...ALL I CAN DO NOW IS WORK HARD.
AH...
THE MEDICATION IS WEARING OFF...
IT'S PAINFUL BECAUSE WE ARE LOVERS.
...I KNOW. I SHOULD STOP TAKING THE DRUG AND GO BACK TO BEING CO-WORKERS FOR A WHILE.
AS HER COLLEAGUE...

GOOD MORNING.
GOOD MORNING.
I SHOULD DO MY BEST TO SUPPORT HER.
YES.
ABOUT THIS THING HERE...
Just a little more!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK!
THE PROJECT HAS BEEN SUCCESS-FULLY COMPLETED.
THE CUS-TOMER'S FEEDBACK HAS BEEN SUPERB TOO.
GO DRINK YOUR-SELVES SILLY TONIGHT!
イエ

IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I LAST HAD THE CHANCE TO LEISURELY WALK AND LOOK AT THE SCENERY LIKE THIS.
...SHIN-JI.
HH
HH
AND YOU...
HALF WAY THROUGH, YOU JUST STOPPED COMPLAIN-ING...
THANK YOU SO MUCH.

.....
...YOU DID A GREAT JOB.
YOU WORKED SO HARD TO HELP ME...
IT'S THE FIRST TIME...
THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN HER CRY.
SO MUCH.
SHE WORKED HARD.

I'M HAPPY.
THAT I COULD SHARE THIS WITH HER.
...STRANGE, EVEN THOUGH I DIDN'T TAKE THE DRUG...

SHE'S
SO CUTE.

LET'S CELE-BRATE...
TO THREE YEARS TO-GETHER.
カチン
CHEERS!

Chapter 3 – Clone

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HIRO!

sizzle
HIRO,
DID YOU SET OUT THE PLATES?
sizzle
THANK YOU.
I PUT OUT THE CHOP-STICKS AND SERVED THE RICE TOO.
YEAH.
YOU CAN DO ANYTHING ON YOUR OWN NOW.
YOU'RE HELPING MOM A LOT.
clatter
clatter
blub blub

clatter clatter
I'M GOING, MOM!
TAKE CARE!
clatter clatter
パスタマーマ
パスタマーマ
Pasta Mama
WELCOME!
AHA HA HA
PLEASE SIT WHER-EVER YOU LIKE.

WILL HIROMI BE ALL RIGHT?
SHE'S A FIRST-GRADER NOW, ISN'T SHE?
YES, I THOUGHT I'D WAIT UNTIL SUMMER BREAK,
BUT IT SEEMS SHE'S GOTTEN USED TO SCHOOL ALREADY.*
CHEF.
DO YOU HAVE A MOMENT?
I'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT GETTING MORE HOURS...
.....
Pasta Mama
I SEE.
THERE WILL BE MORE EXPENSES FROM NOW ON TOO.
tap tap
キャッ
キャッ

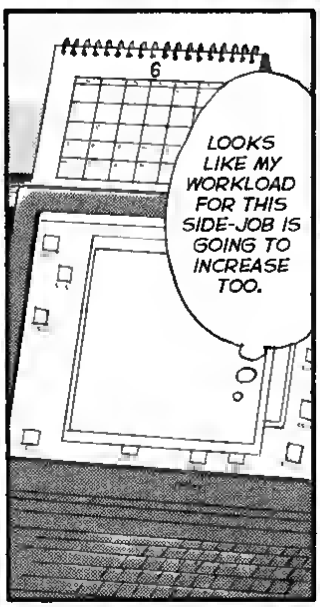
*Japan's school year starts in early April. The summer break starts in late July and marks the end of the first semester.

MOM, I BRUSHED MY TEETH.
OKAY.
SAY GOOD NIGHT TO YOUR FATHER AND SISTER.

GOOD NIGHT!
OH YEAH, YOUR HEALTH CHECK IS ON SUNDAY.
OKAY, MOM.
SLEEP WELL!

GOOD NIGHT.

IT'S GOING TO GET BUSY...


LOOKS LIKE MY WORKLOAD FOR THIS SIDE-JOB IS GOING TO INCREASE TOO.

カチャ

14
SOON,
HIRO WILL BE OLDER THAN MANAMI.
DAD!
LET'S PLAY CARDS WHEN WE GET HOME!
IT'S A PROMISE!
WHEW...
WE HAD A LOT OF FUN TODAY,
BUT YOU'RE STILL FULL OF ENERGY.
HM?
wobble wobble
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT CAR...?
OH—!

...I'M VERY SORRY, MS. KAWASE.
UNFORTUNATELY, YOUR HUSBAND AND DAUGHTER...
MS. KAWASE.
THIS MIGHT BE TOO MUCH FOR YOU RIGHT NOW BUT,
PLEASE LISTEN.
ON TOP OF YOUR PARENTS PASSING AWAY EARLY,
YOU THEN... LOST YOUR HUSBAND AND DAUGHTER IN THIS TERRIBLE ACCIDENT...
THEREFORE, SHOULD YOU SO DESIRE,
OUR HOSPITAL WILL ASSIST YOU WITH
GIVING BIRTH TO YOUR DAUGHTER AGAIN, AS A CLONE.

THERE ARE MANY PRECEDENTS OF CLONING OVERSEAS.
IT HASN'T BEEN APPROVED IN JAPAN AS OF YET.
BUT THE TECHNOLOGY HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED.
FOR NOW, I'M SUGGESTING THIS OFF THE RECORD.
WE COULD MAKE IT APPEAR AS THOUGH YOU WERE PREGNANT WITH YOUR LATE HUSBAND'S CHILD.
BUT IF YOU WERE TO GIVE BIRTH TO A CLONE USING MANAMI'S SOMATIC CELLS,
THERE WOULD BE COSTS.
BUT IF YOU LET US COLLECT DATA THAT COULD HELP BALANCE IT OUT.
...PLEASE DO IT!!
EH?
NO, THERE'S NO NEED TO RUSH, YOU CAN TAKE YOUR TIME AND THINK...
...I WANT TO GIVE THAT CHILD A CHANCE TO LIVE.

I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT THAT CHILD!
I'LL DO ANYTHING WITHIN MY POWER!
MS. KAWASE, YOU MUST UNDER-STAND...
HER DNA WILL BE EXACTLY THE SAME.
IT'LL BE IDENTI-CAL TO MANAMI'S.
HOW-EVER,
SHE WILL COME TO HAVE A DIFFERENT PERSON-ALITY.
PLEASE DON'T FORGET THAT.

カチャ
SO, HIRO.
カチャ
MOM IS THINKING OF WORKING MORE.
IT'LL MEAN THAT I WON'T BE HOME AS MUCH.
SINCE YOU CAN GET BY ON YOUR OWN NOW,
SURE.
CAN YOU DO YOUR BEST WITH ME, HIRO?
BUT MOM WILL BE DOING HER BEST.
10
ガヤ
ガヤ
ガヤ
ガヤ
ガヤ
ガヤ
WELCOME!
Pasta Mama
パスタマーマ
パスタマーマ
Pasta Mama

VRRRRR
VRRRRR
VRRRRR
VRRRRR
HOW HAS SHE BEEN SINCE STARTING SCHOOL?
SHE CAN DO MORE AND MORE ON HER OWN.
AHA HA HA
IT HELPS ME A LOT.
...NO, I'M NOT.
YOU'RE AMAZING, MS. KAWASE.
BUT I STILL NEED TO PROVIDE FOR EVERY-THING.
HIRO IS THE ONE
WHO HAS SHOULDER-ED IT.

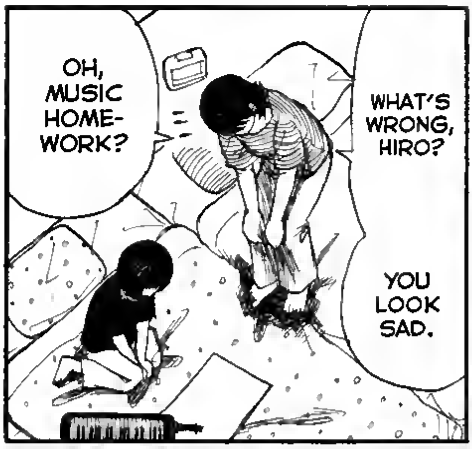
BUT FOR HER FATHER AND SISTER.
SHE WAS BORN NOT FOR HERSELF.
AND TO GIVE ME REASON TO LIVE.
Wahh
Wahh
General Hospital
AMAZ-ING.
Wahh
Wahh
HER BIRTHDAY IS THE SAME AS MANAMI'S.
SHE HAS SHOULDER ED THAT.

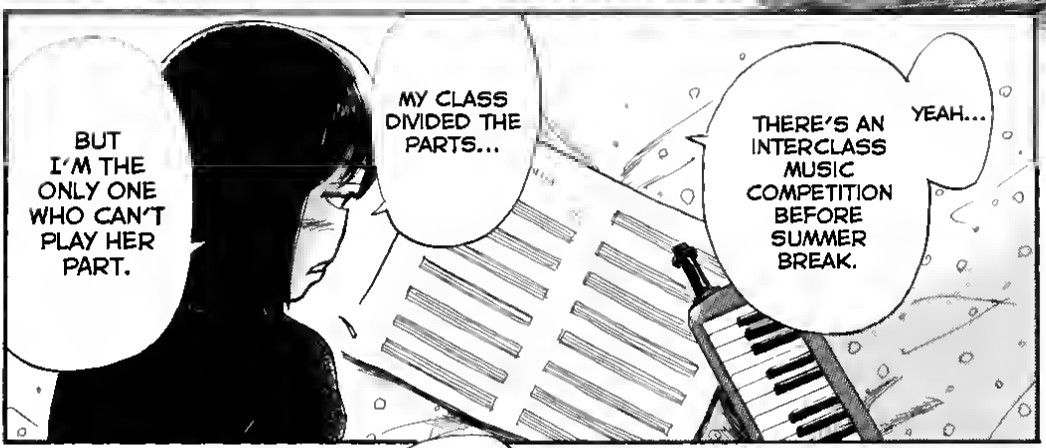
HIRO WAS THE SPITTING IMAGE OF MANAMI.
THE WAY SHE ACTED WHEN SHE WAS UPSET...
HER SLEEPING HABITS.
HER SMILE. HER HAIR-STYLE.
WERE YOU A GOOD GIRL?
YOUR MOM IS HERE.
HIRO!
みどり保育園
BUT AS SHE GREW UP, DIFFERENCES STARTED SLOWLY APPEARING.
YES.
HIROMI.
UNLIKE THE NAIVE MANAMI,
GREW UP TO BE A REASON-ABLE, UNSELFISH CHILD.
THEY SAY PERSON-ALITIES ARE DEFINED BY GENETICS AND ENVIRONMENT.
HIRO, WHO HAS THE SAME DNA AS MANAMI, IS GROWING UP TO BE A DIFFERENT PERSON.
THAT IS CERTAINLY MY DOING.

HIROMI!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
YAAAAAAAAY!
YOU'RE SEVEN YEARS OLD!
14
SHE REALLY IS SUCH A CONSIDERATE CHILD.
...CHILDREN DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT!
I'M WORKING MORE NOW, SO IT'S OKAY!
IF SHE WERE MANAMI...
YAAAAY!
I want a lot of things!
This one! And that one!
...DO WE HAVE ENOUGH MONEY, MOM?
SINCE TOMORROW IS SUNDAY,
LET'S GO BUY YOU SOME CLOTHES.
YOU NEED NEW CLOTHES FOR THE SEASON, SO LET'S BUY A LOT!

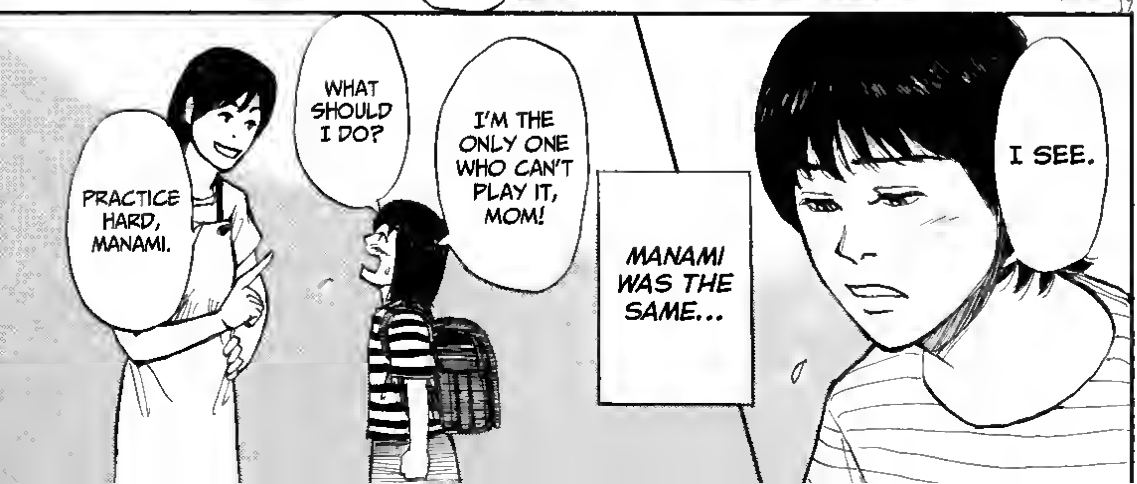
AS SHE GETS OLDER LIKE THIS,
I WONDER IF HER SIMILARITIES WITH MANAMI WILL FADE.
WOW.
UMM, ERRR.
HOW ABOUT THIS ONE?
COUVERT
HOW ABOUT THIS ONE?
SURE.
BOTH ARE CUTE.
WHEW, LET'S TAKE A BREAK.
SODA FLOAT!
I'LL HAVE ICE COFFEE.
YOU ALWAYS HAVE SODA FLOAT.
YOU REALLY LIKE IT, DON'T YOU?
YEAH, IT'S MY FAVORITE.

LATELY, MANAMI'S IMAGE
HAS BEEN OVERLAPPING ON HIRO FREQUENTLY.
I'M PROBABLY THINKING OF HER A LOT,
SINCE IT'S CLOSE TO THE DAY OF THE ACCIDENT.

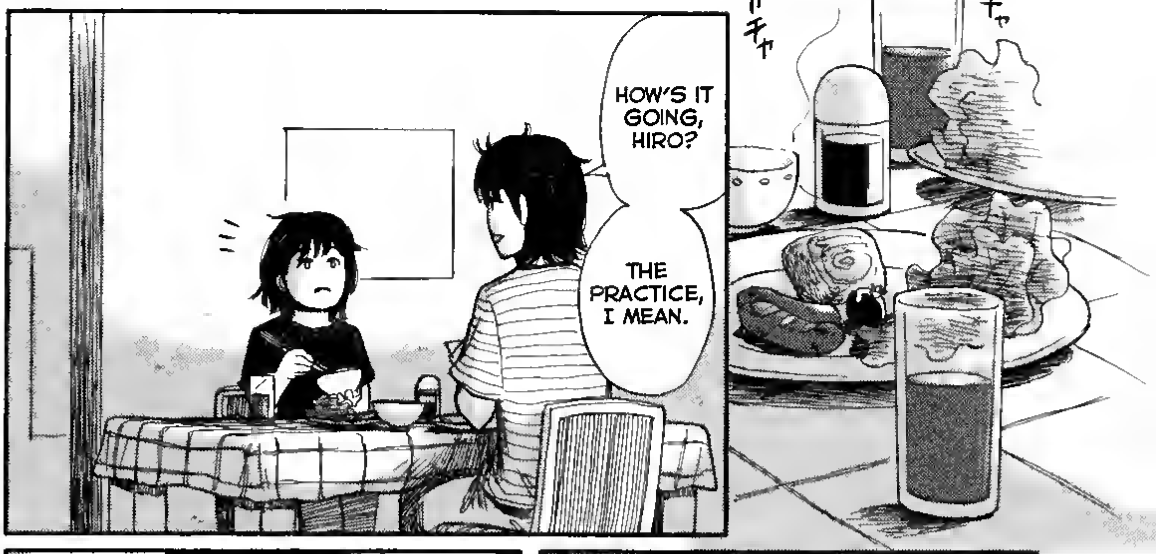

OH, MUSIC HOME-WORK?
WHAT'S WRONG, HIRO?
YOU LOOK SAD.


BUT I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN'T PLAY HER PART.
MY CLASS DIVIDED THE PARTS...
YEAH...
THERE'S AN INTERCLASS MUSIC COMPETITION BEFORE SUMMER BREAK.

WE'RE GOING TO BE IN LAST PLACE!
HIRO, YOU CAN'T PLAY AT ALL!
EH!?
PRACTICE AT HOME!


WHAT SHOULD I DO?
I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN'T PLAY IT, MOM!
PRACTICE HARD, MANAMI.
MANAMI WAS THE SAME...
I SEE.

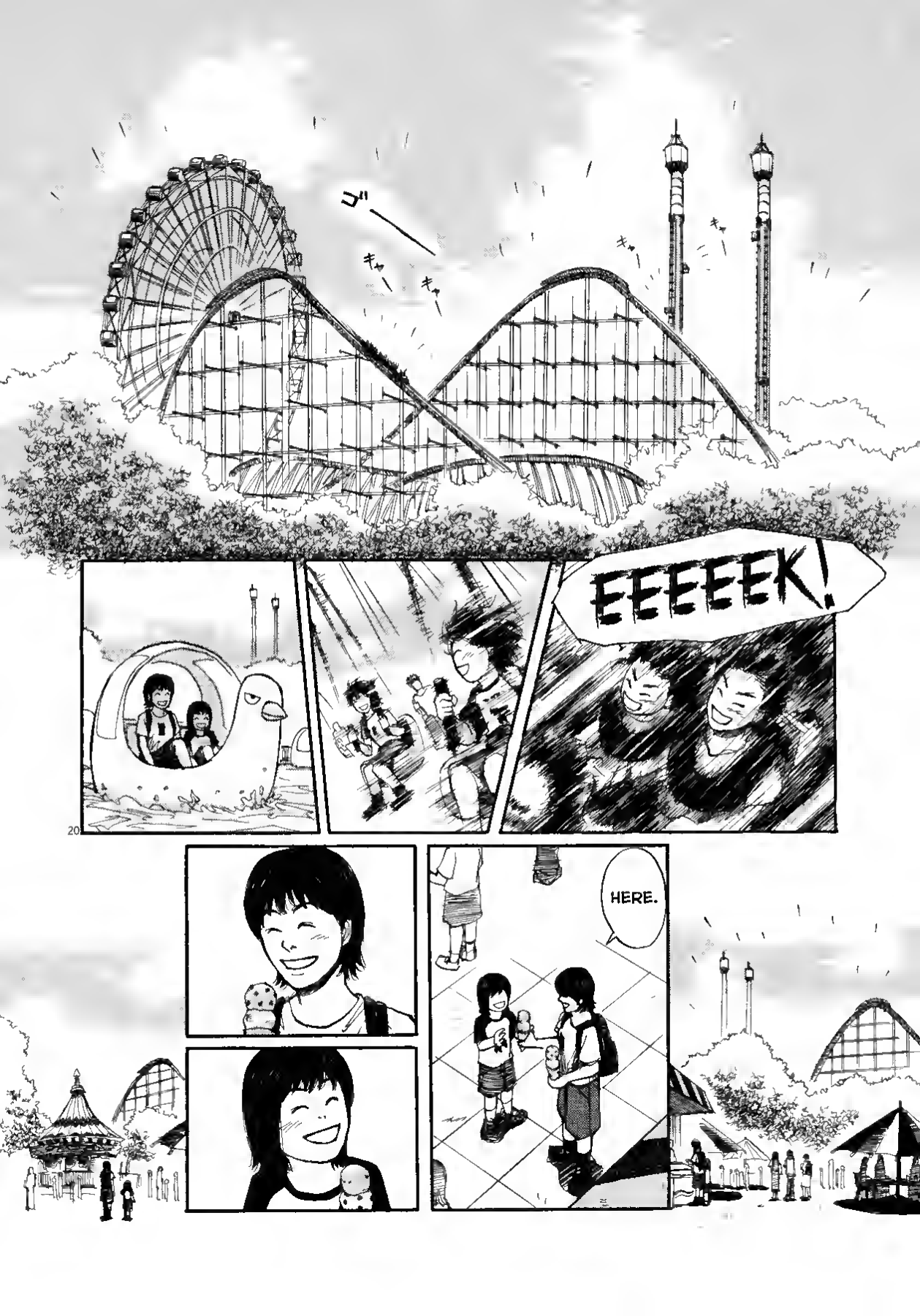
I CAN'T DO IT!
I DON'T WANT TO PRACTICE!
YES YOU CAN, DON'T DESPAIR!
MANAMI, LOOK AT THE NOTES.
TOO FAST! KEEP THE RHYTHM!
NO, NO, THE NEXT KEY.
Piii!
Pikkii
APPARENTLY THEY HAVE SIMILAR THINGS THAT THEY'RE NOT GOOD AT.
IN THE END, MANAMI COULDN'T DO IT.
SHALL WE PRACTICE TOGETHER?
HIRO, JUST DO YOUR BEST AND IT'LL BE ENOUGH.
I SEE...
NO, IT'S ALRIGHT.
I'LL PRACTICE AFTER SCHOOL.


HOW'S IT GOING, HIRO?
THE PRACTICE, I MEAN.
カチャ
カチャ

……
OKAY...

OH, REALLY?
HOW ABOUT WE GO TO THE AMUSEMENT PARK THIS SUNDAY?
HIRO, TO CHEER YOU UP,

OKAY!
IT'S NEARBY,
BUT WE CAN HAVE A LOT OF FUN TO MAKE UP FOR IT.
A NEW ONE OPENED IN THE CITY CENTER RECENTLY.

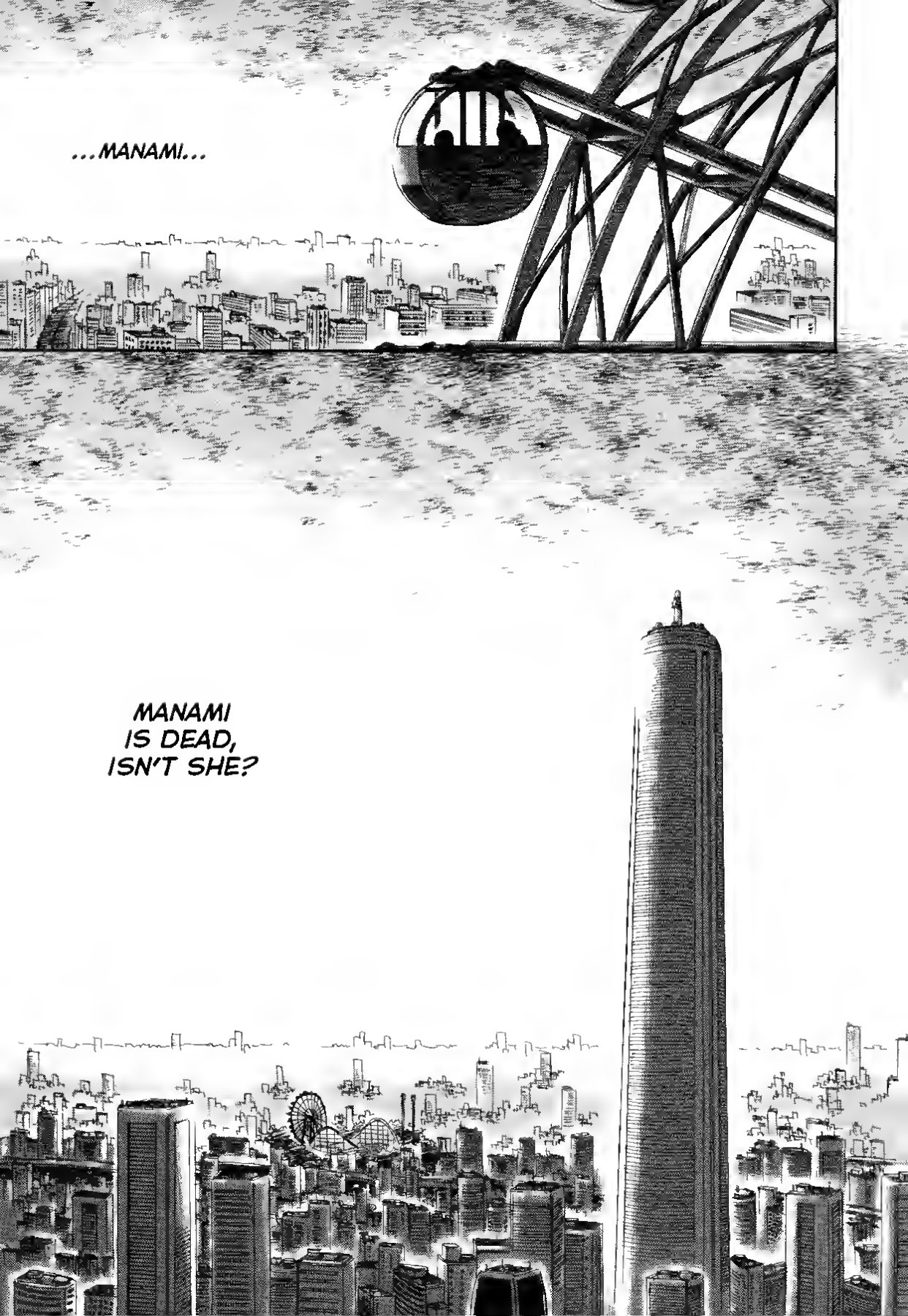

ゴ
キャー
キャ
キャ
EEEEEK!
HERE.

キャー
キャー
LET'S GO THERE!
WHAT SHALL WE DO NEXT?
キャー
キャー
Generation Future
...ALL RIGHT!
...MANAMI HATED FERRIS WHEELS.
WOW...

IT'S NOT SCARY.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
ヤダー
ヤダ
ギャ
SHE FELL DOWN THE STAIRS ONCE.
ギャー
SINCE THEN SHE HAD BEEN AFRAID OF HEIGHTS.
クス
ALL SORTS OF DIFFERENT THINGS CHANGED BECAUSE OF THEIR ENVI-RONMENT.
...IT'S INTEREST-ING HOW, THOUGH THEY HAVE THE SAME DNA,
22

HIRO WILL SOON BE OLDER THAN YOU.
...MANAMI.
...I WONDER
IF I WON'T THINK OF YOU AS MUCH WHEN THAT HAPPENS, MANAMI.
YEAR BY YEAR,
HIRO WILL BE MORE AND MORE HERSELF.
WHAT EXACTLY WAS IT THAT MOM DID?
...HEY,
...BUT BACK THEN, I REALLY...
ARE YOU GLAD THAT YOU WERE BORN, HIRO?
ARE YOU ANGRY THAT I USED YOUR BODY FOR MY OWN SAKE, MANAMI?

I REALLY THOUGHT THAT I COULDN'T LIVE ON IF I DIDN'T DO IT.
...UUU.
UUUHU...
UUU...


...MANAMI...
MANAMI IS DEAD, ISN'T SHE?

MOM,
IT LOOKS LIKE THE CONCERT IS GOING TO GO WELL.
I PRAC-TICED AFTER SCHOOL BY MYSELF EVERY DAY.
...EH?
AND THEN...
buuuuu
buuuuu
buuuuu
26

HIRO, YOU REALLY AREN'T VERY GOOD.
THERE'S TWO MORE WEEKS.
FROM TODAY ON, WE'LL PRACTICE TOGETHER.

YUP.
COME AND WATCH ME.

YOU...
YOU LEARNED TO PLAY?

...O-OF COURSE!

48th Music Performance
NEXT UP IS CLASS 1-2.

...AMAZING.
48th Music Performance
YOU OVER-COME YOUR WEAK-NESSES
BUT WITHOUT COM-PLAINT,
YOU WERE BORN FOR SOMEONE ELSE'S SAKE.
YOU'RE AMAZING, HIRO.

AND INSPIRE OTHERS...

MOM WILL BE OKAY FROM NOW ON.
...I'LL BE OKAY.

Chapter 4 – Antidepressor

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ONO
STOCK COMPANY
GOOD JOB, HARADA.
YOU CAN GO HOME, THEN.
SATO, I FINISHED MY TASK.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE REST.
AND TODAY IS YOUR FATHER'S BIRTHDAY, ISN'T IT?
IT WAS REALLY BUSY LAST WEEK.
BUT THERE'S STILL...
WELL, YES...
REALLY? IT'D BE HELPFUL.
OH, YAMAOKA, HOW'S YOUR CHILD?
IF YOU WANT, I CAN TAKE CARE OF THE REST. YOU CAN GO HOME.
NOT AT ALL.
SORRY FOR ALWAYS BOTHERING YOU.
SATO, CAN YOU COME OVER HERE FOR A BIT?
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
SURE!

tap tap
...ALL RIGHT, ALL DONE.
rustle
.....
Taxi!
TO M TOWN, PLEASE.
GOT IT.

HOW'S IT GOING?
THIS MOMENT ALWAYS BRINGS-BACK MEMORIES...
hah
hah
hah
hah
HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAMS ARE ONLY THE FIRST STEP.
DON'T MESS UP AT A TIME LIKE THIS
ARE YOUR STUDIES FOR THE ENTRANCE EXAM PROGRESSING?
YEAH.
hah
YEAH...
試験会場
YOU FOOL!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?

OUCH...
throb
THAT I BEGAN TO HAVE STOMACH PAINS.
IT WAS THEN
IF YOU'RE GOING TO ATTEND A SECOND CLASS HIGH SCHOOL, MAKE IT ONE OF THE TOP FIVE!
GOT IT!?
BUT MAKE IT A COMPANY THAT OPERATES IN SCIENTIA TOWER.
I'LL LET YOU CHOOSE YOUR JOB.
GOT IT?
A GAP YEAR IS UNACCEPTABLE
GO TO THE SAME UNIVERSITY AS YOUR BROTHER.
カリ
カリ
I NO LONGER HAD THE WILLPOWER TO GO TO SCHOOL.
WHAT STOMACH PAIN!?
I ONLY GOT INTO WHAT MY FATHER CALLED A THIRD CLASS UNIVERSITY.
I FAILED TO GET INTO THAT UNIVERSITY.
I FAILED THE NEXT YEAR TOO.
カリ
カリ
カリ
カリ

IT'S BEEN THREE MONTHS SINCE THE SEMESTER STARTED!
YOU'RE PATHETIC!
AREN'T YOU MORTIFIED!?
...NOT REALLY.
...WHO CARES ABOUT UNI-VERSITY.
HOW ABOUT YOU GO THERE IF YOU WANT TO GO SO BAD?
YUJI!
APO-LOGIZE TO YOUR FATHER!
thud

はぁ
はぁ
I'LL PAY FOUR YEARS' TUITION.
AFTER THAT, YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN.
...FINE.
DO AS YOU LIKE.
I DIDN'T GO BACK, OF COURSE.
IF YOU WANT ME TO FORGIVE YOU, COME AND APOLOGIZE.
TENON
...WEIRD.
I QUIT UNI-VERSITY,
MOVED TO A CHEAP APARTMENT
AND GOT BY WORKING PART-TIME.

I'LL GIVE YOU MEDICINE.
BUT JUST... DON'T OVERDO IT...
MY BODY WON'T MOVE.
I CAN'T GET A JOB LIKE THIS...
WAS I THIS WEAK...?
SERIOUSLY. THAT DIVISION CHIEF KEEPS ASKING FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE.
A HA HA HA HA!
I SERIOUSLY THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO DIE THIS WEEK.
BUT WE MADE IT ON TIME.
YEAH, WE REALLY WORKED LIKE CRAZY.
WELL, UNTIL TOMORROW. GOOD NIGHT!
GOOD NIGHT.

...WHAT AM I LIVING FOR?
I WANT TO WORK, LAUGH, AND LIVE NORMALLY.
CLICK
CLICK
I WANT TO BE ACCEPTED. JUST ONCE WOULD BE ENOUGH.
I DON'T MIND IF I END UP DEAD AFTER A FEW YEARS.
IF THERE WERE MEDICINE THAT WOULD MAKE ME FEEL NORMAL...
CLICK
CLICK
Mail
Ishihara Laboratory
Psychopharmaceuticals
Therapeutic instrument available. This
lso for those who find it impossible t
lease contact us. Consultation is fre
Mail

THIS IS THE PLACE
skrch
Ishihara Laboratory
creak
huh
huh

YEAH.
huh
huh
ALL RIGHT, HERE GOES.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? SHALL WE CARRY ON?
YOUR CONDITION HAS ADVANCED QUITE A BIT.

!
I'M SORRY. SATO,
MASHI-DA?
SEE YOU TOMOR-ROW.
SORRY TO LEAVE EARLY.

MY WIFE HAS BEEN REALLY NERVOUS EVER SINCE THE PREG-NANCY...
IF IT'S ALL RIGHT, COULD I GO HOME EARLY TODAY?
OF COURSE.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE REST, SO PLEASE GO AHEAD.
PLEASE LET ME KNOW WHENEVER THERE'S NEED.
SORRY, AND THANK YOU.
SATO,
I'LL HELP YOU.
YOU HAVE TOO MUCH WORK ON YOUR HANDS.
PLEASE GIVE ME SOME.
.....
SURE ...
めん日和屋
THANKS FOR THE HELP TODAY.
NOT AT ALL, IT'S NOTHING.

HAHAH, I WONDER IF THAT'LL HAPPEN.
YOU'LL BURN OUT.
YOU DO TOO MUCH WORK BY YOURSELF.
IT WILL, PLEASE LET OTHERS DO MORE.
...I'M SURE SHE WAS BROUGHT UP BY GOOD PARENTS.
Hahaha
But I went home early too
ALWAYS BRIGHT AND ENERGETIC,
...SHE'S SO CONSIDERATE TO OTHERS.
Last time too.
Oh yeah, am I that time.
YOU SEEM PRETTY POPULAR THOUGH, HARADA.
YEAH... WELL, I'M NOT POPULAR...
I SEE...
I ENDED UP SOCKING HIM ONE.
MY BOY-FRIEND CHEATED ON ME LAST YEAR AND WE BROKE UP.
YOU DON'T HAVE A GIRLFRIEND, RIGHT?
SATO, YOU ALWAYS GO HOME LATE...
Mgh
OH, BY THE WAY,

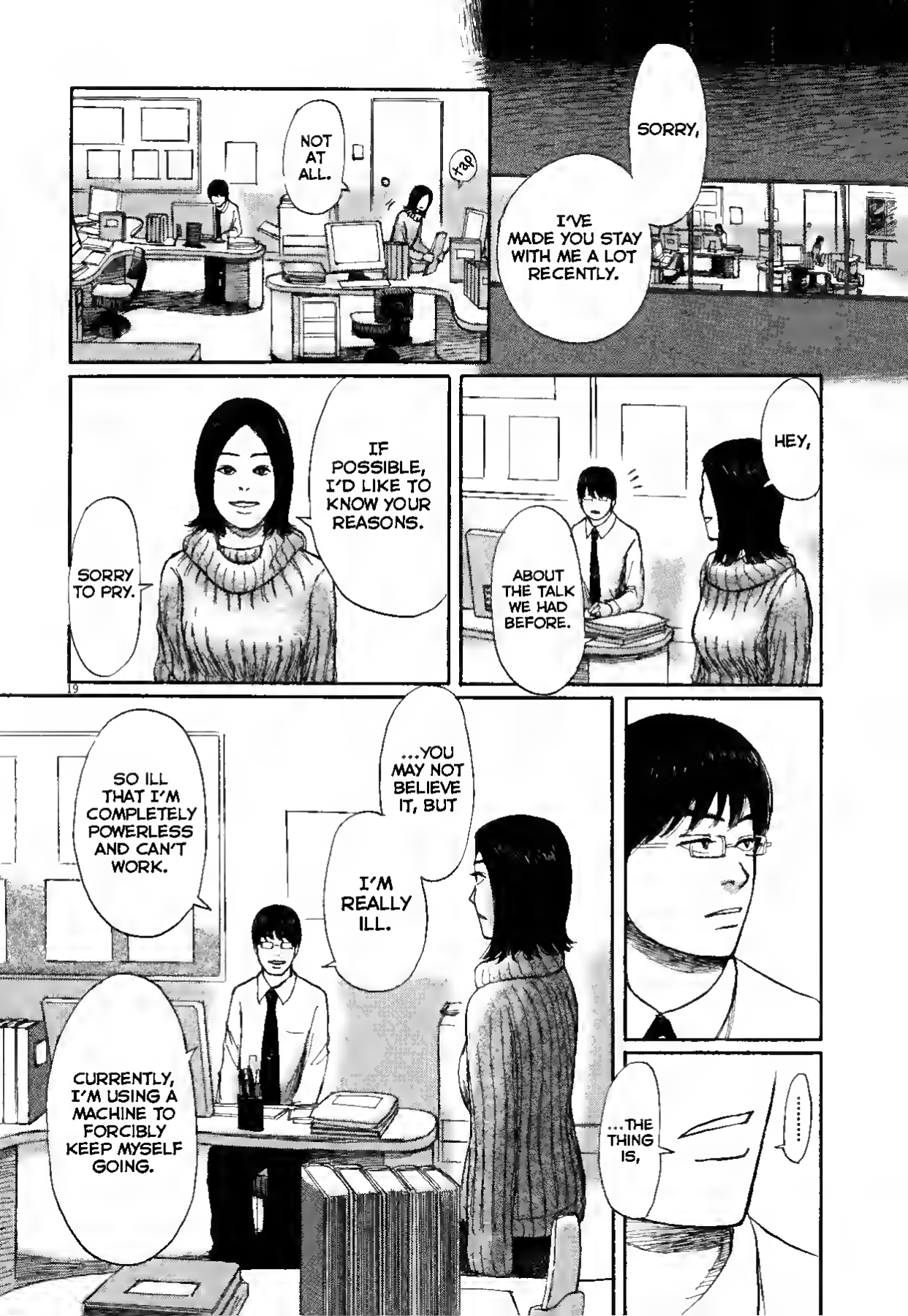
SATO,
WILL YOU GO OUT WITH ME?
UM...
step
THANKS FOR THE MEAL.
WELL, I'M HEADED THIS WAY.
NOT AT ALL, SEE YOU TOMORROW.
BUT I WANT TO BE ALONE.
...BUT REALLY, THANK YOU.
.....
...THANK YOU.
UNTIL TOMOR-ROW, THEN.

THIS IS THE ANTIDEPRESSOR.
YOU JUST NEED TO WEAR THIS ON YOUR HEAD
FOR TEN MINUTES, ONCE A MONTH.
clak
clak
SINCE IT'S A MACHINE, IT CAN BE TARGETED VERY ACCURATELY.
IT'S MANY TIMES AS EFFECTIVE AS MEDICINE AND THE SIDE EFFECTS ARE CONTROLLABLE AS WELL.
...IS WHAT I WANT TO SAY, BUT
TRUTHFULLY, THE DEVICE IS INCOMPLETE.
ITS EFFECT IS SIMILAR TO FORCEFULLY SUPPRESSING THE SICKNESS.
WHILE THE EFFECT LASTS, YOU CAN LIVE ENERGETICALLY.
BUT THE EFFECT WILL WEAR OFF.
WHEN IT DOES, THE STRAIN OF WHAT YOU DID WHILE UNDER THE EFFECT WILL COME BACK TO YOU.
IF YOU CONTINUE USING THE DEVICE, THE STRESS ON YOUR HEART AND CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM MAY RESULT IN DEATH.

AFTER ALL, IF I DON'T CHANGE ANYTHING I'LL DIE IN MY ROOM ANYWAYS.
YES.
UNDER-STOOD.
DO YOU WANT TO PROCEED DESPITE THAT?
MR. SATO,
THIS IS A BIT LIKE ALCHEMY.
SQUEAK
TO PERFECT THIS DEVICE?
WILL YOU USE THAT DATA
IN EXCHANGE, I'LL GET
ALL SORTS OF DATA FOR LATER USE.
IS IT REALLY ALL RIGHT TO DO THIS FOR FREE?
SURE IT IS.
SO THERE'S NO WAY TO PERFECT THIS MACHINE, I THINK.
THE ONLY WAY TO HEAL A WORN OUT SPIRIT IS TO TRULY REST.
IT JUST SCRAPES TOGETHER WHATEVER IS LEFT BY FORCE.
THE DEVICE DOESN'T CREATE NEW ENERGY FOR LIFE.
YOU CAN'T CREATE SOME-THING THAT DOESN'T EXIST.

TRUTH BE TOLD,
MY FATHER WAS ZEALOUS ABOUT EDUCATION, LIKE YOURS.
I WASN'T ABLE TO FOLLOW HIS WISHES AND DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL.
I STARTED SELLING ILLEGAL GADGETS AND MEDICATION FOR MONEY,
I ENDED UP HEADING DOWN THE WRONG PATH.
17
EVEN NOW I MAKE MY MONEY OFF PEOPLE LIKE MY FATHER, THE "ELITE".
IT SEEMS LIKE THEY'RE QUITE STRESSED OUT TOO.
THEY MAKE GOOD CUSTOMERS.
BUT THERE ARE LIFESTYLES LIKE YOURS AS WELL.
...I JUST WANT TO BE ACCEPTED FOR ONCE.
WORK LIKE OTHER PEOPLE,
BE EMPLOYED IN A COMPANY...
IF I CAN MAKE LIFE A LITTLE EASIER FOR OTHERS,

THAT'LL BE PLENTY.
MCB
This is my child
Oh!


SORRY,
I'VE MADE YOU STAY WITH ME A LOT RECENTLY.
NOT AT ALL.
Hap
HEY,
ABOUT THE TALK WE HAD BEFORE.
IF POSSIBLE, I'D LIKE TO KNOW YOUR REASONS.
SORRY TO PRY.
...YOU MAY NOT BELIEVE IT, BUT
I'M REALLY ILL.
SO ILL THAT I'M COMPLETELY POWERLESS AND CAN'T WORK.
CURRENTLY, I'M USING A MACHINE TO FORCIBLY KEEP MYSELF GOING.
...THE THING IS,
.....

SO THIS ISN'T THE REAL ME.
THERE'S NO CURE BEYOND USING THE DEVICE.
AS SUCH, THERE'S NO FUTURE WITH ME.
...TRUTHFULLY, I'M A VERY WEAK PERSON.
I'M NOT A PERSON THAT COULD GO OUT WITH OTHERS.
...YOU MAY NOT KNOW IT, BUT
BEING ABLE TO WORK NORMALLY LIKE THIS IS A MARVEL FOR ME.
I DON'T WANT ANYTHING MORE.
SORRY, BUT COULD YOU FORGET ABOUT THIS TOPIC?
...DAMN.

EVEN THOUGH I THOUGHT I HAD MADE MY DECISION,
hah
hah
hah
JUST A LITTLE BIT MORE, MR. SATO.
IT'S ALREADY TAKING EFFECT.
MAYBE I DID WANT SOMEONE TO ASK ME.

hah
hah
I WISH I HAD A DIFFERENT EXCUSE.

Phew...

hah
hah

...UNDER-STOOD.

...YOUR BODY IS GETTING CLOSE TO ITS LIMIT.

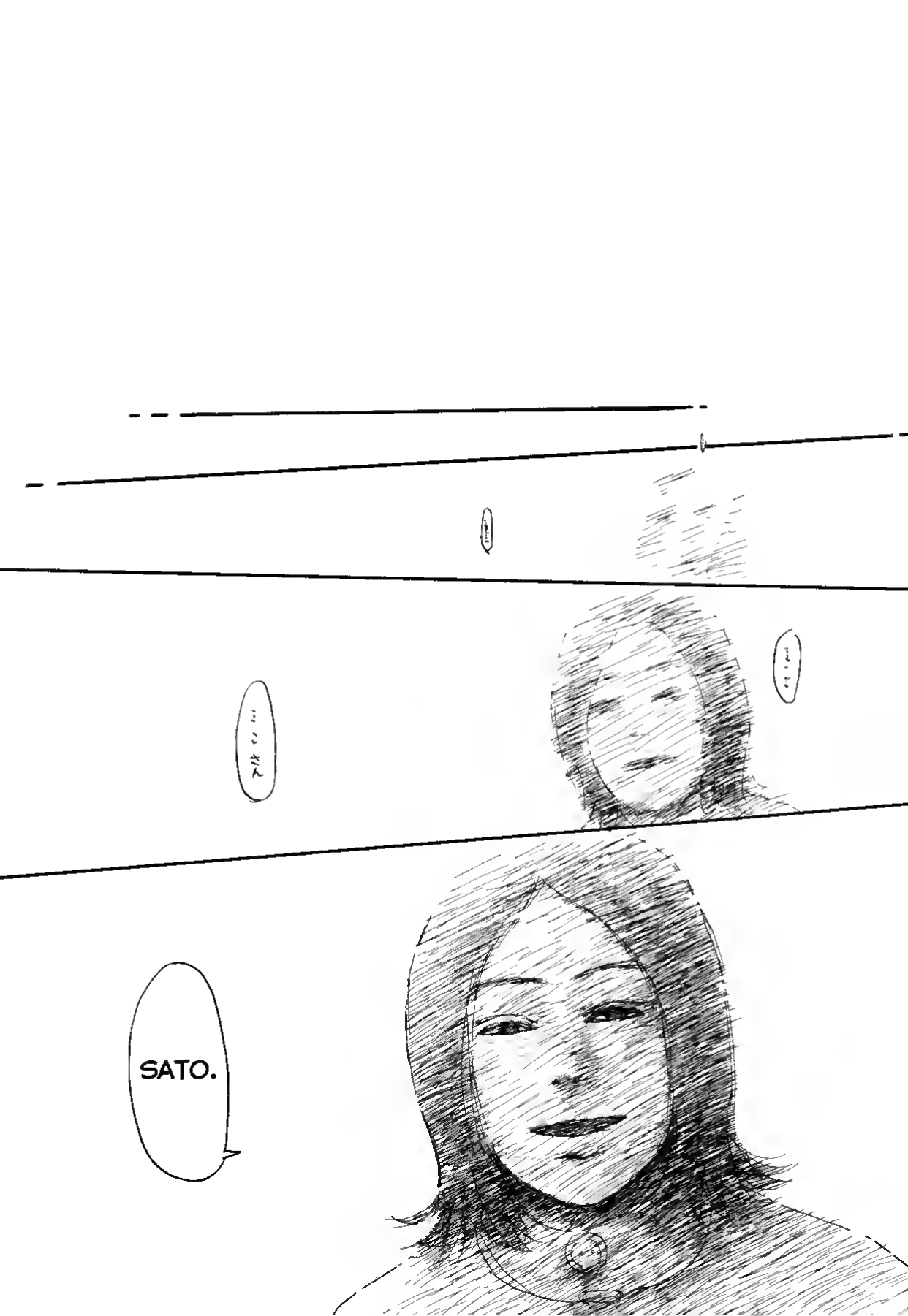
HEY, SATO.
CAN YOU COME OVER FOR A BIT?
SORRY, CAN I GO GET SOME COFFEE FIRST?
SURE!
...IT'S SOONER THAN USUAL.
blub blub
blub blub
click
Phew...

slump
hah
hah
hah
HAS IT COME?
hah
hah
hah
hah
hah
BANG
splash
hah
hah
shake
hah
hah
...I'M STUMBLING.
hah
cak

hah
TO SEE EVERYONE'S FACES IN THE END...
hah
JUST A BIT MORE...
IT'S RIGHT THERE...
hah
TO THAT DOOR...
hah
hah
hah
hah
HEY,
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
hah
hah
WAS WORTH IT.
hah
hah
hah
USING THAT MACHINE ...
hah
hah
step
hah
Please!
IT REALLY WAS...

I'LL DO MY BEST!
JUST PART-TIME WORK IS FINE, PLEASE LET ME PROVE MYSELF!
I DIDN'T DIE IN MY ROOM THE WAY I USED TO BE,
IT WAS WORTH IT.
YOU'VE DONE A GOOD JOB.
PLEASE DO YOUR BEST AS A PERMANENT MEMBER OF STAFF.
AH, I'LL HELP!
OH, MY HANDS ARE FREE!
I'LL DO THAT!
...IT WAS JUST FOUR YEARS,
BUT IT WAS A GOOD LIFE.
IT TRULY WAS WORTH IT.

SATO!
...SATO!?
SATO!!


SATO.

YOU WERE UNCON-SCIOUS FOR THREE DAYS.
...FI-NALLY!

I'VE TALKED A LOT ABOUT YOU TO MY PARENTS.
REST AND GET BETTER AT OUR PLACE,
SO WE CAN WORK TOGETHER AGAIN.
SATO,
WOULD YOU MIND COMING TO MY HOUSE?
30
SO TAKE YOUR TIME AND REST.
TO LET YOU COME BACK TO WORK WHEN YOU GET BETTER.
EVERYONE ASKED THE BOSS
MASHIDA, YAMAOKA ...
...EVERYONE IS WAITING FOR YOU.

OKAY?
...IS THIS
EVEN POSSIBLE?
IS IT OKAY FOR ME TO LIVE?

Chapter 5 – Drugs

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SHI-BATA.
SHI-BATA.
YES?
SHI-BATA!
HEY SHIBATA, THE TEACHER'S TALKING TO YOU!
Huh?
THIS IS NO TIME TO BE SPACING OUT.
TEST ARE COMING UP, FOCUS!
...OKAY.
SHI-BATA!
SHIBA-TAAAA.
LET ME SHARE YOUR UM-BRELLA.
I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT "LOVE2000" ...
NOPE.
GREAT! LET ME SEE YOUR NOTES!
hah
hah
DO YOU HAVE WORK TODAY?
AND GIVE ME SOME POINTERS FOR THE TEST AGAIN.

WHEW, YOU REALLY SAVE ME EVERY TIME.
Royal H
EVERYONE SITTING NEAR ME IS AN IDIOT.
I'M GLAD I'M FRIENDS WITH YOU.
YOU KNOW MY GRADES AREN'T THAT GREAT EITHER.
EVERYONE'S GOING TO WANT TO GET THEIR HANDS ON MY NOTEBOOK AGAIN.
Gimme a copy!
Gimme a copy!
IT'S CRUMBLING ALREADY.
AHA HAHA.
...TROUBLE AT HOME?
YEAH ...
SEEMS LIKE MOM DOESN'T CARE ABOUT ME OR MY SISTER ANYMORE.
I SEE...
LATELY, MY MOTHER HAS BEEN BRINGING MEN HOME TOO.
I'M THINKING ABOUT LEAVING HOME ONCE I GRADUATE.
REALLY ...
GYA HA HA HA HA!

IT'S JUST THAT MY MOM ALWAYS DRIES MY FUTON.
I'M SO HAPPY JUST LYING ON IT.
AREN'T YOU SLEEPING TOO MUCH?
BUT IT'S BEEN NICE AND WARM RECENTLY.
...THEY'RE SO LOUD.
GYA HA HA HA HA!
If you sleep that much you should at least stay awake in class!
VEGETABLE
I'M GOING TO DROP BY THE SUPER-MARKET.
RIGHT, THANKS FOR THE NOTES.
HERE WE GO.

CAN YOU SMELL THE SUN?
YEP.
Ahhhh...
flump
IT FEELS GOOO OOOD!
...I'M STILL ALL RIGHT.
BECAUSE I HAD TIMES LIKE THAT WITH MOM.
BUT MY SISTER DOESN'T REMEMBER THOSE DAYS...
カチャ
Beer

ZZZ...
ZZZ...
I'M HOME, AND THANKS.
I'LL MAKE DINNER RIGHT AWAY.
WELCOME BACK, SIS.
I PREPARED RICE AND MISO SOUP.
slide
chk

カチャ
カチャ
MMM... MATHS IS A LITTLE...
LET'S HAVE A LOOK AFTER DINNER.
DO YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS WITH STUDIES?
HOW'S IT GOING? HAVE YOU GOTTEN USED TO CLUB ACTIVITIES?
THEN I GUESS I'LL BE COUNTING ON YOU.
I'M ALREADY IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.
NO, I'LL HELP.
I SEE.
NO NEED.
JUST SLEEP IN THE MORNING.
SIS, I'LL MAKE BREAKFAST WITH YOU STARTING TOMORROW.

CAN YOU SERVE THE RICE?
SURE.
チョン チョン
WE LEFT LATE!
SEE YOU!
hah
hah
hah
hah
BACK IN THE DAY, MOM DIDN'T GET ALONG WITH HER PARENTS AND RAN AWAY FROM HOME WITH HER LOVER.
hah
EVEN SO, SHE SAID SHE WAS HAPPY AT FIRST.
I'M HOME!

HEEEY, HAVE YOU BEEN A GOOD GIRL?
WELCOME BACK
GOOD WORK.
DEAR, COULD YOU AT LEAST CHANGE AND WASH YOUR HANDS FIRST?
SORRY, SORRY.
EH?
I'M PREGNANT WITH A SECOND ONE.
HEY,
IT'S ALL RIGHT, ISN'T IT?
I'LL WORK MORE HOURS TOO.
...YEAH

...SORRY.
I CAN'T GO ON ANYMORE...
ARE YOU WITH SOME WOMAN AGAIN?
YOU ARE, AREN'T YOU!?
MIHO, COME HERE.
JUST A MINUTE! WHERE ARE YOU!?
I HEARD YOU GOT FIRED TOO!?
I WAS A FIFTH GRADER IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.
MY SISTER WAS SIX.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN!?
CLICK
...WHAT DO YOU...
OKAY, I'LL TRY.
SORRY, BUT PLEASE TAKE CARE OF MIHO.
FROM NOW ON, MOM MIGHT NOT BE AT HOME MUCH BECAUSE OF WORK.

hah
SORRY ...
hah
IT SEEMS LIKE YOUR MOTHER ISN'T VERY GOOD WITH ALCOHOL OR AT SERVING CUSTOMERS...
MOM...
BLARGH
Cough Cough
BLARGH
thump
zzz...
rise
THANKS TO HER, I WAS ABLE TO DO THAT.
BUT I'LL MAKE SURE YOU CAN GO TO HIGH SCHOOL, AT LEAST.
11
WHAT, I'VE SUPPORTED YOU UNTIL NOW!
I HAVE THE RIGHT TO GO AND HAVE SOME FUN!
YES, OF COURSE...
IT'S... NOT ENOUGH.
YOU'RE IN HIGH SCHOOL, GIRL. DO SOME WORK!
HERE. THIS IS FOR THIS MONTH'S LIVING EXPENSES.
EH? JUST THIS?
SO OF COURSE IT'S FINE FOR HER TO HAVE SOME FUN
AFTER WORKING SO HARD.
BUT...

B-BUT MIHO IS STILL JUST IN FOURTH GRADE.
EVEN IF IT'S JUST EVERY NOW AND THEN, COULD YOU AT LEAST MAKE DINNER OR...
YOU'RE SO ANNOYING! YOU'VE BEEN DOING NOTHING BUT COMPLAINING LATELY!
YOU CAN DO THAT MUCH YOURSELF!
SHIBATA, PLEASE READ THE NEXT BIT.
YES.
MOM DOESN'T DO ANYTHING MOTHERLY ANYMORE,
AND SHE'S A BAD INFLUENCE FOR MIHO.
ONCE I GRADUATE, I THINK I'LL MOVE AWAY WITH HER.
MOM PROBABLY...
ONLY THINKS OF US AS BURDENS NOW, JUST LIKE DAD DID.
WELL DONE.

SHIBATA, I FOUND IT.
FOUND WHAT?
WHERE TO GET "LOVE 2000".
NEXT TIME BOTH OF US HAVE A DAY OFF,
LET'S GO GET SOME.
PLEASE LET ME TAKE YOUR ORDER
IF YOU'VE DECIDED.
SURE.
Welcome!
SHI-BATA.
DO YOU KNOW THE DRUG "LOVE 2000"?
SHI-BATA...
"LOVE 2000"...

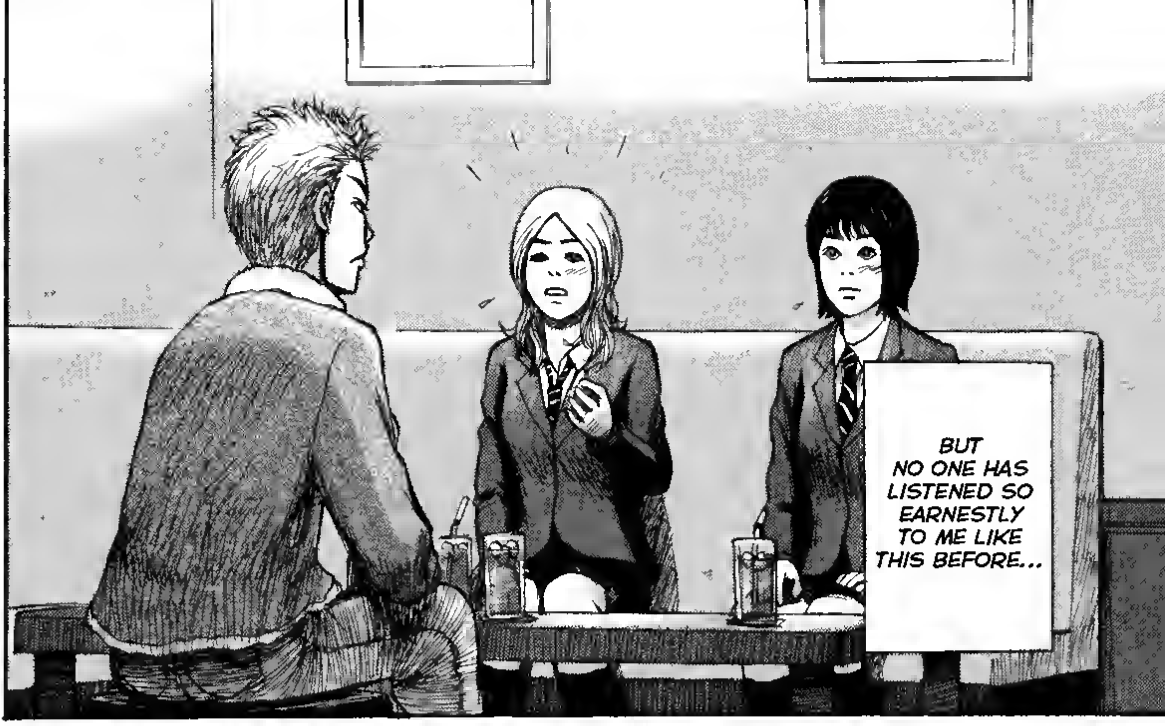
A DRUG?
IT'S A DRUG THAT
CAME OUT LONG AGO, IN 2000. IT WAS LEGAL BACK THEN.
I DON'T KNOW...
The ones with the heart on them
IT DOESN'T GIVE YOU THAT MUCH PLEASURE, BUT IT DOESN'T HARM YOUR BODY AND IT'S NOT ADDICTIVE.
BUT EVEN THOUGH IT'S SYNTHETIC, IT WAS EXPENSIVE,
SO IT WASN'T VERY POPULAR.
IT SEEMS LIKE SOMEONE STARTED DISTRIBUTING IT FOR FREE.
FOR FREE?
YEAH,
JUST FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE PROBLEMS AT HOME OR SOMETHING.
THE GUY WHO MAKES IT SEEMS TO BE AN OFFICE WORKER.
I HEARD HE'S PUT ALL HIS MONEY INTO THIS.
ALTHOUGH THINGS THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH "LOVE" ARE SUPPOSED TO BE KIND TO THE BODY,

IN 2001,
SOME GIRL DIED AFTER TAKING IT.
HEY, HEY!
CALL AN AMBU-LANCE!
WHILE WAITING FOR THE AMBU-LANCE,
EH, WHAT?
SHE KEPT SAYING THE SAME THING.
...LO... LO...
...LOVE...
I CAN SEE LOVE...

ゾクッ
...DOES SEEING LOVE MEAN FEELING THAT SOMEONE LOVES YOU?
NO, IT SEEMS LIKE IT MEANS THAT YOU REALLY SEE LOVE. A THING CALLED LOVE.
A THING CALLED LOVE?
WHAT IS THAT SUPPOSED TO LOOK LIKE?
WHAT KIND OF SHAPE DOES IT TAKE?
NO IDEA. I'VE NEVER SEEN IT.
BUT AFTER SEVERAL CASES LIKE THAT,
THE PILL WAS OUTLAWED.
SOMEHOW, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF BLOOD TYPES,
IT SEEMS THAT PEOPLE OF ONE SPECIFIC BLOOD TYPE WILL DIE IF THEY TAKE "LOVE".
.....
...BUT FOR SOME REASON
EVER SINCE I HEARD ABOUT IT, I'VE BEEN CURIOUS ABOUT "LOVE2000".
I DON'T CARE WHICH BLOOD TYPE I AM.

OH, WE'RE LATE.
LET'S RUN.
I'M KINDA EXCITED.
ME TOO.
I FOUND SOMEONE THROUGH A SENIOR OF MINE.
SHE'LL SHOW US THE WAY.
PLEASE HELP US OUT.
SURE.
IT'S DOWN-TOWN.
LET'S TAKE A TRAIN TOGETH-ER.

HMMMM.
LET'S GO TO A CAFE OR A KARAOKE BOX.
I'VE GOT SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU TWO,
I'M GONNA HAVE BOTH OF YOU TALK A BIT ABOUT YOURSELVES.
IF I THINK YOU QUALIFY, I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO SOMEONE ELSE.
WE TALK TO A LOT OF PEOPLE SO WE CAN TELL WHEN SOMEONE IS LYING.
...IT MIGHT BE ARBITRARY, BUT
WE'LL ONLY GIVE IT TO PEOPLE WE THINK ARE "GOOD".
YOU'LL TELL YOUR STORY TO THAT PERSON TOO.
THIS WILL BE REPEATED THREE OR FOUR TIMES.
ALL RIGHT, LET'S START.
...IT'S STRANGE.
HOW COME I'M TELLING SOMETHING THIS PERSONAL TO SOMEONE I JUST MET...


BUT NO ONE HAS LISTENED SO EARNESTLY TO ME LIKE THIS BEFORE...

ALL RIGHT,
YOU'RE GOOD TO GO.
I'LL INTRO-DUCE YOU TO THE NEXT PERSON.

...WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

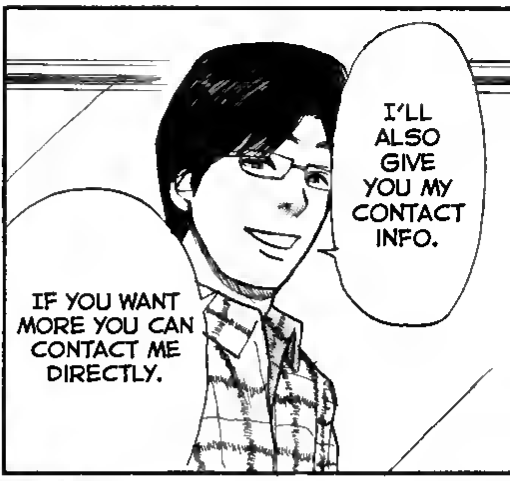
FOLLOW ME.
OKAY, I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO THE NEXT PERSON.

I FEEL A CONNECTION OF SOME KIND...
YEP, OKAY.
I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO THE MAKER.
HE'LL BE THE LAST ONE TO HEAR YOUR STORY.
THIS WAY. FOLLOW ME.
THIS IS THE PLACE.
...A NORMAL APARTMENT BUILDING?

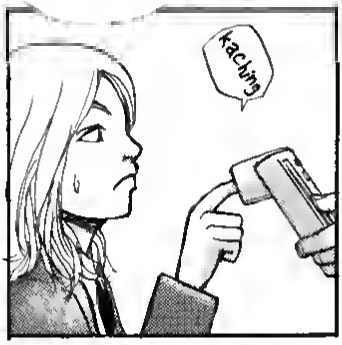
CLICK
YES?
IT'S KOBAYASHI. I BROUGHT SOMEONE WITH ME.
OKAY, I'M OPENING THE DOOR.
SOUND ONLY
PUSH
カチャ
EVENING.
PLEASE COME IN.

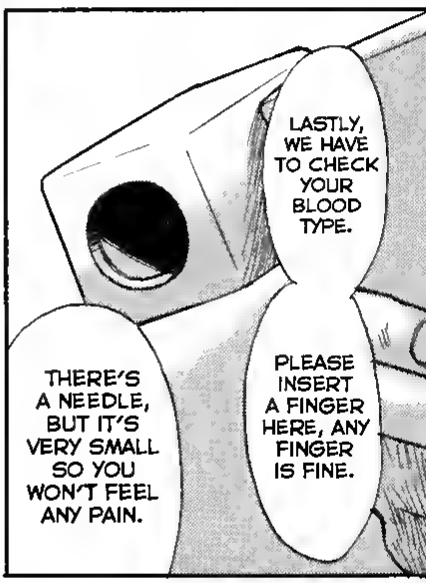
22
IS THIS WHERE IT'S MADE...?
PLEASE HAVE A SEAT.
SO, COULD YOU TELL YOUR STORY ONE MORE TIME?
YES.
...I SEE.
I'LL GIVE YOU THE PILLS.

OH,
THANK YOU!
ALSO, IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE WITH ANYTHING ELSE.
IF YOU NEED A GUARANTOR FOR EXAMPLE, OR ANYTHING ELSE, CONTACT ME.


I'LL ALSO GIVE YOU MY CONTACT INFO.
IF YOU WANT MORE YOU CAN CONTACT ME DIRECTLY.

kaching

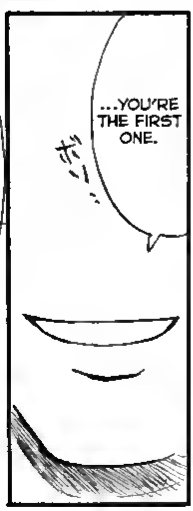

kaching


LASTLY, WE HAVE TO CHECK YOUR BLOOD TYPE.
PLEASE INSERT A FINGER HERE, ANY FINGER IS FINE.
THERE'S A NEEDLE, BUT IT'S VERY SMALL SO YOU WON'T FEEL ANY PAIN.

beep beep

OKAY, NO PROBLEM.
beep beep

BECAUSE YOU'LL DIE IF YOU TAKE THEM.
SORRY, I CAN'T GIVE THE PILLS TO YOU,

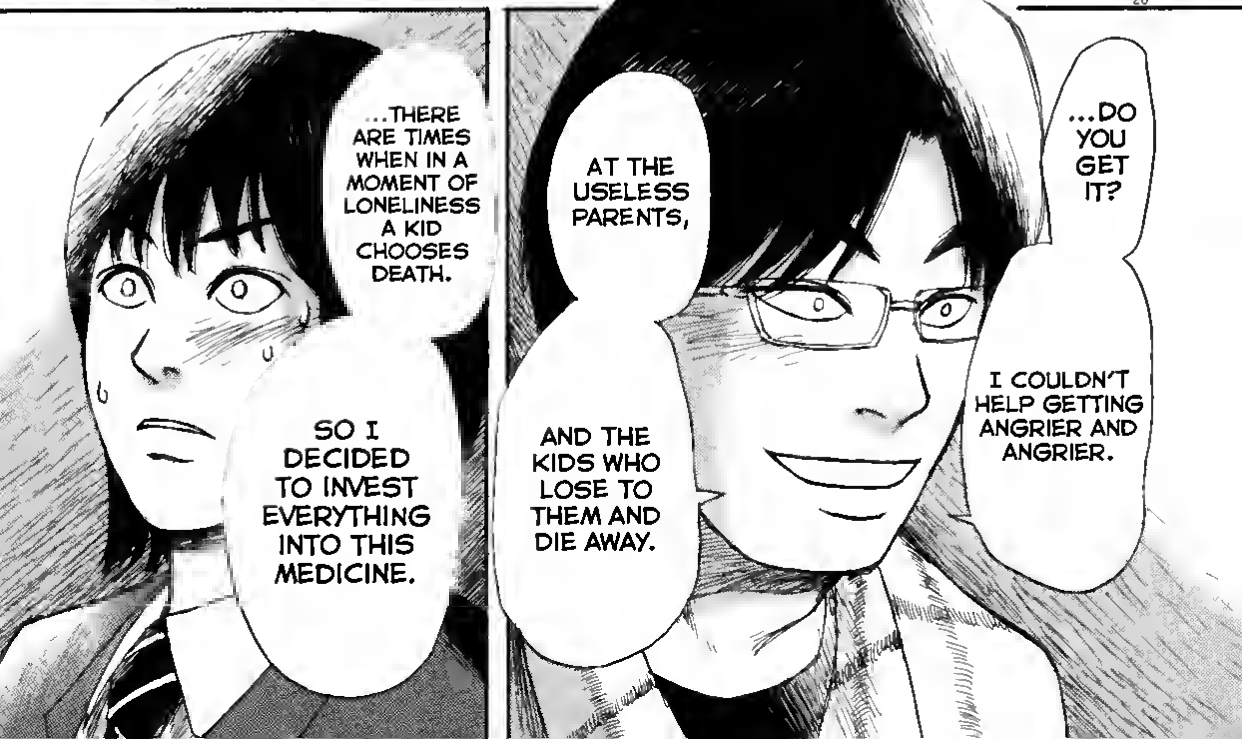

...YOU'RE THE FIRST ONE.

I'LL GIVE THEM TO YOU, THOUGH.
HERE.
WHEN THINGS GET TOUGH, TAKE ONE.
NEVER GIVE THEM TO ANYONE ELSE.
BUT I CAN GIVE YOU ADVICE ANYTIME YOU NEED ME TO..
IF ANYTHING COMES UP, CONTACT ME WHENEVER.
ガタン

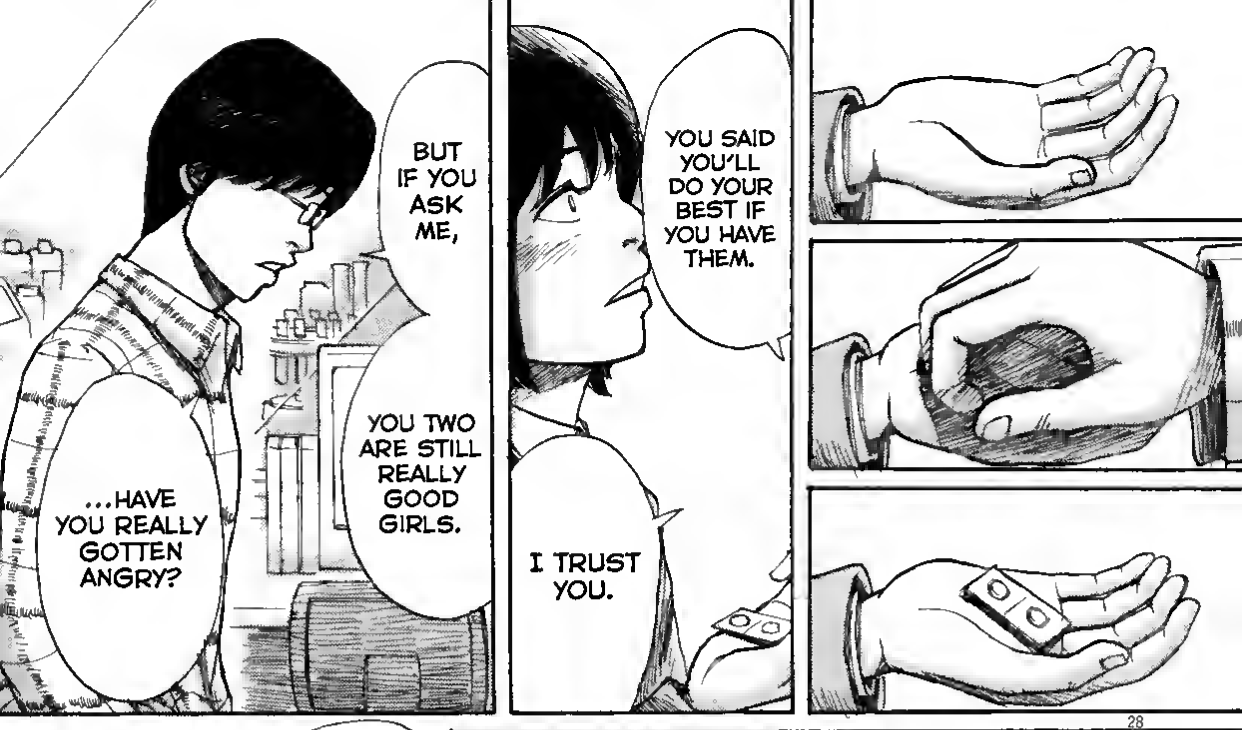
HEY,
CAN PEOPLE OF MY BLOOD TYPE REALLY SEE LOVE IF THEY TAKE THIS?
I WANT TO HAVE THEM AS A LUCKY CHARM.
IF IT'S TRUE,
I KNOW I CAN GET THROUGH ANYTHING IF I HAVE THEM WITH ME!
PLEASE!
.....
YOU'RE LYING...
IF...
THINGS GOT TOO HARD FOR YOU,
YOU THINK IT'D BE FINE TO TAKE IT IN THE END, DON'T YOU?
VERY WELL,
I'LL TELL YOU MY STORY.

...MY PARENTS ABANDONED ME AS A CHILD.
UNTIL I GREW UP, THERE WERE NO DECENT ADULTS IN MY LIFE.
BASICALLY, YOU COULD SAY THAT USELESS PARENTS ARE BECOMING MORE COMMON.

SO I STUDIED TO DEATH AND STARTED A SUCCESSFUL COMPANY.
I WANTED TO SAY "THIS IS THE SON YOU CAST AWAY".
...BUT,
I COULDN'T BE SATISFIED WITH THAT.


...DO YOU GET IT?
I COULDN'T HELP GETTING ANGRIER AND ANGRIER.
AT THE USELESS PARENTS,
AND THE KIDS WHO LOSE TO THEM AND DIE AWAY.
...THERE ARE TIMES WHEN IN A MOMENT OF LONELINESS A KID CHOOSES DEATH.
SO I DECIDED TO INVEST EVERYTHING INTO THIS MEDICINE.

I'VE GOT EVERYTHING RIDING ON THIS MEDICINE.
IF EVEN A SINGLE PERSON DIES...
THEN I'LL TAKE IT TOO.
SO IF SOMEONE DIES FROM IT, IT MEANS I LOSE.
I HAVE THE SAME BLOOD TYPE AS YOU.
...YOU CAN TAKE IT.
BUT IF YOU DO,
MAKE SURE YOU'RE PREPARED TO TAKE RESPON-SIBILITY FOR MY DEATH AS WELL.
THAT'S HOW MEANINGFUL GIVING OUT THIS MEDICINE IS TO ME.
GIVE ME YOUR HAND.


BUT IF YOU ASK ME,
YOU TWO ARE STILL REALLY GOOD GIRLS.
...HAVE YOU REALLY GOTTEN ANGRY?
YOU SAID YOU'LL DO YOUR BEST IF YOU HAVE THEM.
I TRUST YOU.

IF THEY'RE SO USELESS THAT WORDS DON'T HELP, LEAVE THEM.
BUT JUST TRY TO TELL THEM FIRST.
HAVE YOU SCREAMED AND CRIED LIKE YOU WERE CRAZY IN FRONT OF YOUR PARENTS?
HAVE YOU PROTESTED LIKE THAT?

Click
Aha hah
Aha haha
.....
...HEY.
...HM?
MOM, IF NOTHING CHANGES,
I'M TAKING MIHO AND LEAVING ONCE I GRADUATE.
YOU CAN DO WHATEVER AFTER THAT.

IF YOU CALL YOURSELF A PARENT,
THEN YOU SHOULD AT LEAST MAKE DINNER ONCE IN A WHILE,
RIGHT?
HMPH...
ARE YOU DITCHING THE PARENT WHO RAISED YOU?
BUT YOU HAVE TWO CHILDREN!
YOU GAVE BIRTH TO TWO CHILDREN!
MAYBE YOU HAD IT TOUGH,
WHAT IS IT YOU...
I'M FINE BECAUSE MY CHILDHOOD WAS HAPPY!
BUT MIHO HAS NEVER SEEN YOU REALLY SMILE!

JUST MAKE SOME WARM FOOD!
IF YOU'RE AT HOME,
JUST DRY OUR FUTONS OUT ONCE IN A WHILE!
JUST TRY!
...THAT WOULD BE ENOUGH.
IF YOU DO THAT, I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE MONEY,
I'LL DO WHATEVER I NEED TO DO TO SUPPORT US...

Chapter 6 – Robots

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LOOK, OVER THERE, FOR EXAMPLE,
THERE WAS NOTHING AT ALL AROUND THAT AREA.
フラ…
OOPS.
スッ
LET'S GO BACK. WE HAVE WORK TO DO.
YES.
I NEVER WOULD'VE THOUGHT THAT THERE'D BE THIS MANY BUILDINGS THERE ONE DAY.
IS THAT SO?
I'M ALL RIGHT.
THANK YOU.

GOOD JOB TODAY, AS USUAL.
YOU TOO, NAO.
THANKS.
NOT AT ALL.
News10
OH YEAH, NAO, TOMORROW...
NEXT IN THE NEWS...
AS THE VIEWERS MAY BE AWARE, THE FIRST ROBOT RENTAL SERVICE
COMPANIES WERE FOUNDED A FEW YEARS AGO.
THE FIRMS RENT ROBOTS FOR VARIOUS PURPOSES FOR BOTH INDIVIDUALS AND COMPANIES.
RRS ロボット・レンタル
THE CURRENT ROBOTS ARE STILL LACKING IN THEIR ABILITY TO HOLD COMPLEX CONVERSATIONS AND OTHER COMMUNICATION CAPABILITIES.
BUT THEY ARE CAPABLE OF TIRELESSLY PERFORMING VARIOUS ADVANCED TASKS ACCORDING TO THEIR PROGRAMMING.
BECAUSE OF THAT, SOME COMPANIES HAVE IMPLEMENTED ROBOTS AS AN EXPERIMENT
TO CUT COSTS AND...
A NURSING ROBOT?

RFM-0138
RPT-0215
RMM-0772
THEY CAN ALL PERFORM NURSING FUNCTIONS ONCE THE SOFTWARE IS INSTALLED.
NO MATTER WHICH MODEL YOU DECIDE ON,
YES, OF COURSE WE HAVE THOSE.
RRS サイテックス
SCiTEX.
PARDON ME, BUT IF I MAY SO INQUIRE, IS THE PATIENT GOING TO BE A MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY?
...NO.
I SEE ...
FOR A SLIGHTLY HIGHER PRICE, YOU CAN GET A FULLY CUSTOM-MADE ROBOT.
YOU CAN EVEN CHOOSE AN APPEARANCE THAT IS TO YOUR LIKING.
ガヤ
IS THAT SO...
I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT.
AND I THOUGHT, IF POSSIBLE, I'D MUCH RATHER SPEND MY DAYS AT HOME INSTEAD OF A HOSPITAL...
...ACTUALLY I WAS DIAGNOSED WITH A MALIGNANT TUMOR, AND IN A FEW YEARS...
I HAVE NO FAMILY.
...IT'S FOR ME.

...ALTHOUGH, THE HISTORY OF THIS INDUSTRY IS SHORT,
OUR COMPANY HAS RECEIVED NUMEROUS SIMILAR REQUESTS.
beep
beep
REALLY!?
SUCH AS HANDLING MATTERS RELATED TO THE APARTMENT,
Nursing
Contact
Funerals
Handling the estate
YES... THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO HAVE NO RELATIVES, OR WHOSE RELATIVES LIVE FAR AWAY.
MANY WORRY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEY PASS AWAY.
THE FUNERAL,
CONTACTING THE FAMILY...
WE ARE COLLABORATING WITH OTHER COMPANIES TO PROVIDE ALL THOSE SERVICES.
I'D LIKE TO HAVE YOU DO THAT FOR ME.
UNDERSTOOD.
SCITEX
I, HASEGAWA, WILL BE YOUR CONTACT REPRESENTATIVE.
.....
...I'M GLAD TO HEAR THAT.

click
THANK YOU.
HERE YOU GO, BEDTIME MEDICINE.
Phew
YES, UNDER-STOOD.
THOUGH COMBINING WORK AND THE OUT-INGS WILL BE A BIT TROUBLE-SOME.
I WANT TO HAVE A LOOK AROUND AT EACH OF THE BUILDINGS I HAVE WORKED.
LET'S GO OUTSIDE TOGETHER DURING A BREAK TOMORROW.
OH YEAH, I FORGOT TO TELL YOU JUST NOW.
ding
CHARGING
kaching
WE'LL WALK A LOT, SO YOU REST WELL TOO, NAO.
YES.

GOOD NIGHT.
GOOD NIGHT.
INDEED,
.....
tap
vrrrrr
COMPLEX CONVERSATIONS ARE DIFFICULT,
BUT BY LIVING WITH YOU,
AND BY TALKING TO YOU ALL THE TIME,
LITTLE BY LITTLE, THEY'LL LEARN TO BECOME MORE HUMAN-LIKE.
AND SUBTLE NUANCES ARE STILL IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO COMPREHEND.
ホア!
...THEY MAY BE MACHINES,
BUT THEY SHOULD SLOWLY MATCH THEMSELVES TO THE RHYTHM OF YOUR LIFE.
THEY CANNOT BE YOUR LOVER OR YOUR SPOUSE,

ゴ
BUT PLEASE LIVE TOGETHER WITH THEM AS PARTNERS.
ガタン
ガタン
Game Town
grab
ガッタン
ゴ
ガタン
ガタン
ゴ"
AH, THIS IS IT, THIS IS THE BUILDING.
THIS WAS MY FIRST PROJECT.
YEAH... AH, THE COMPANIES IN THERE HAVE ALL CHANGED NOW.
ゴ"
IT SURE IS A BIG BUILDING.

ゴ
YOU FOOL!
ゴ
ゴ
矢田組
PROB-LEMS WON'T FIX THEM-SELVES!
SAY SOME-THING THE MOMENT YOU MESS UP! GOT IT!?
矢田組
YES!
I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY!
IF YOU SCREW UP, SAY SO RIGHT AWAY!
ゴ
YES.
LET'S GO TO THE NEXT ONE.

IT WAS WHEN I HAD GOTTEN USED TO MY WORK ...
AND THINGS WERE GETTING INTEREST-ING.
AH, THIS BRINGS BACK MEMORIES TOO.
ゴー
12
...YOU'VE LEARNED A LOT, GOOD JOB.
GO HELP OVER THERE NEXT.
OKAY, GOOD WORK WITH THAT.
GOT IT!
UH, IT'S OKAY, I'M...
HEY, LET'S GO DRINKING TONIGHT!
YOU'RE COMING TOO!
YOU IDIOT, YOU GOTTA COME ALONG SOME-TIMES!
chew chew

HE SURE IS.
IT'S FINE TO BE SERIOUS AT WORK, BUT HE DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO RELAX.
THIS GUY LOOKS VERY SERI-OUS.
GAHAHAHA
I LIKE BUILDINGS, SO I GO AROUND TAKING PICTURES OF THEM WITH MY CAMERA...
UMM ...
WHAT DO YOU DO ON YOUR DAYS OFF?
BUT AFTER THAT, THE COMPANY CLOSED IN THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN...
OW, OW...
MAN, YOU'RE TOO SERIOUS!!
CLUB Ritz
WE NEED TO GET BACK TO WORK.
I THINK THAT'S ENOUGH FOR TODAY.
I SEE.
EVERYONE WENT THEIR DIFFERENT WAYS...
I WORKED IN SEVERAL CONSTRUC-TION COMPA-NIES AFTER THAT TOO.
AND I NEED TO SEE THE DOCTOR TOMORROW ...

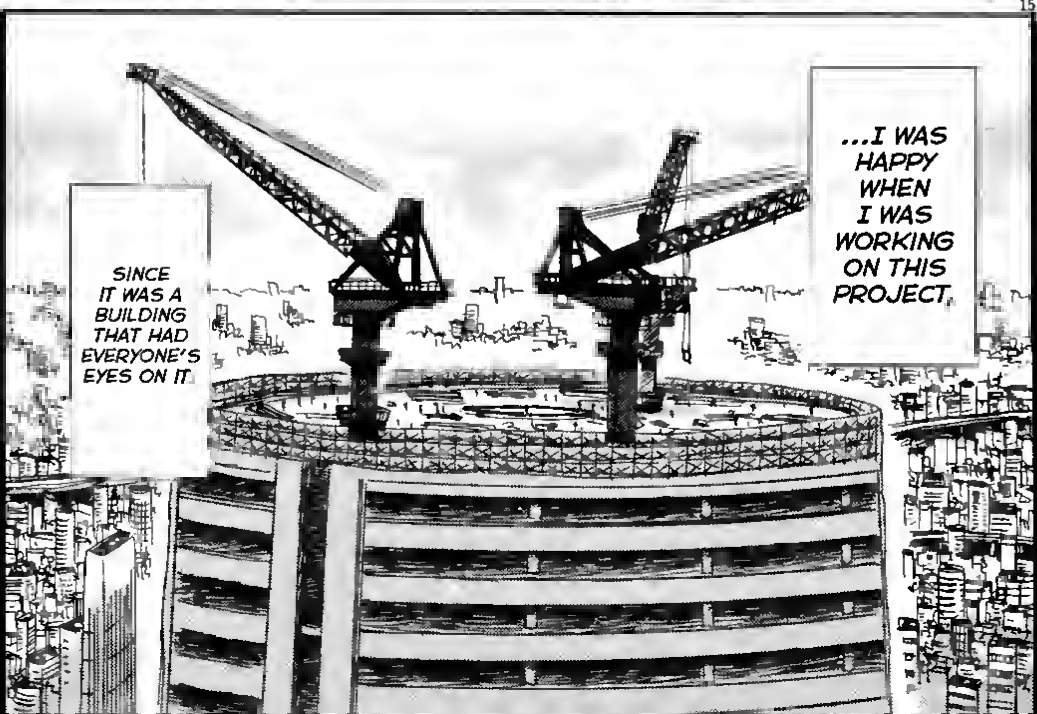
+ General Hospital
HMM...
HONESTLY, IT DOESN'T LOOK TOO GOOD.
THE PROGRESS IS FASTER THAN EXPECTED.
...HOW DOES IT LOOK, DOC-TOR?
.....
AFTER THE LAST VISIT I WENT TO SEVERAL CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES...
OH YEAH, BY THE WAY DOCTOR!
...AND SOMEHOW GOT A JOB!
AT LEAST I CAN PREPARE.
UNDER-STOOD.
YOU MIGHT ONLY HAVE ONE YEAR LEFT.
AT THIS RATE...

12

I WAS SO HAPPY I WAS ACCEPTED ...
EVEN SOME SMALL DESK JOB WOULD BE FINE.
I SAID THAT I JUST WANTED TO BE INVOLVED IN CONSTRUC-TION WORK SOMEHOW,
全第一
ピピピ
バサ
YES.
I'LL UPLOAD THE PRE-SCRIPTION DATA
AND MASSAGE INSTRUCTIONS FOR WHEN YOU ARE TIRED INTO NAO.
...PLEASE TAKE CARE NOT TO OVERDO IT.
WALKING AROUND TO SEE THEM ONE BY ONE WITH HER.
AND THEN, LATELY I'VE BEEN VISITING BUILDINGS I'VE WORKED ON,
I SEE.
CLICK
NNNNG

ゴ——————…
My leg!
tweek tweek

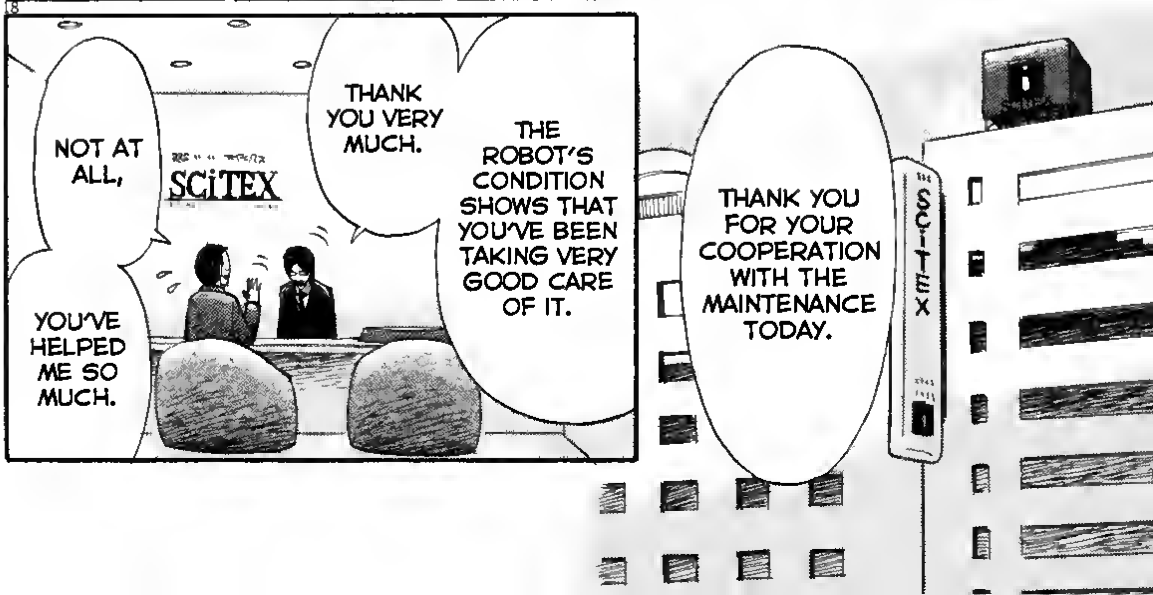
SCIENTIA TOWER...


SINCE IT WAS A BUILDING THAT HAD EVERYONE'S EYES ON IT.
...I WAS HAPPY WHEN I WAS WORKING ON THIS PROJECT.

YOU'RE ALWAYS SO EARLY!
GOOD MORNING!
THERE WAS A NICE GIRL I LIKED
小林組
AT THE COMPANY I WORKED IN BACK THEN...
I DON'T REALLY LIKE THAT KIND OF THING...
DON'T YOU GO DRINKING WITH EVERY-ONE?
UMM...
YOU ALWAYS COME EARLY,
AND LEAVE LATE.
click click
click
AND BESIDES, I DON'T HAVE A COMPUTER AT HOME, SO I STAY HERE TO LOOK UP STUFF.
YEAH...
YOU REALLY LIKE YOUR JOB, DON'T YOU?
...UNTIL THEN, I HAD ALWAYS CONFESSED EVEN IF I THOUGHT IT WAS HOPELESS
SINCE THERE'S NO WAY ANYONE WOULD EVER CONFESS TO ME.
BUT I DIDN'T CONFESS TO THIS GIRL...

I THOUGHT JUST HAVING WORK WAS ENOUGH FOR ME.
SO I HAD GIVEN UP ON THAT SORT OF THING.
...I MEAN, I WAS REJECTED EVERY SINGLE TIME LEADING UP TO THAT POINT.
THAT'S JUST THE WAY IT GOES.
SEE, AS EXPECTED...
LATER, SHE QUIT AFTER MARRYING A MAN WHO WAS JUST RIGHT FOR HER.
IS YOU, NAO.
THE ONLY ONE WHO STAYS WITH ME,
HAHA HA,
AFTER THAT, I JUST WORKED.
BUT THAT DIDN'T GO WELL EITHER.
I EVEN TRIED DATING SERVICES,

JUST A LITTLE BIT LONGER,
IS ALL I'M ASKING.
rub rub


THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION WITH THE MAINTENANCE TODAY.
THE ROBOT'S CONDITION SHOWS THAT YOU'VE BEEN TAKING VERY GOOD CARE OF IT.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
NOT AT ALL,
YOU'VE HELPED ME SO MUCH.
SCiTEX

CITEX.
...NO, AS FAR AS HOW HUMAN THEY SEEM,
THESE ROBOTS THAT WE HAVE NOW ARE STILL LIKE BABIES.
...IN OTHER WORDS, REGRETTABLY,
AT THE MOMENT, IT IS AS IF THE CUSTOMERS WERE RAISING THE ROBOTS.
crackle crackle
crunch crunch
ROBOTS WILL BECOME JUST LIKE HUMANS, I THINK.
ゴ
...IT MAY BE LONG AFTER I'VE DIED,
BUT THANKS TO PEOPLE LIKE YOU, MR. ISHIDA,
crunch crunch
REALLY, WE ARE IN YOUR DEBT.

THAT'S ALL THE BUILDINGS I'M EVER GOING TO WORK ON...
WELL, I SUPPOSE THAT'S ALL MY BODY COULD TAKE.
click
NOT AT ALL. YOU WERE A GREAT HELP. THANK YOU.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
PLEASE TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.
YES, THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING.
IN THE END, I TROUBLED YOU TOO MUCH.
20
WELL THEN, TOMORROW WILL BE THE LAST DAY,
OF TOURING THE BUILDINGS TOO.
OF COURSE YOU WILL.
I HAVE TO LIVE UNTIL THEN.
THIS BUILDING WILL BE COMPLETED IN SEPTEMBER.
I WAS WORKING ON IT WHEN I GOT THE VERDICT FROM THE HOSPITAL.
THE SECOND TO LAST BUILDING OF MY LIFE.
skrch

ゴ――…
ゴ――…
OUCH...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YOU'VE BEEN REALLY PALE LATELY.
YOU'D BETTER GO SEE A DOCTOR.
ゴ…
ゴ…
ガクッ

IT SEEMS TO BE MALIG-NANT,
IT'S TERMI-NAL.
I RECOM-MEND IMMEDIATE HOSPITALI-ZATION.
SINCE YOU HAVE NO RELATIVES, I WILL JUST TELL YOU HERE AND NOW.
YOU PROBABLY HAVE ONLY A FEW YEARS LEFT.
BACK THEN, TOO
RATHER THAN ASKING "WHY ME?"
I THOUGHT IT WAS A FITTING FATE FOR SOMEONE LIKE ME.

BUT AFTER A WHILE I STARTED ASKING MYSELF:
"DID YOU DO EVERYTHING YOU COULD WITH WOMEN AND WORK?"
"IN THE END, WHAT I'VE DONE IS JUST AVERAGE, ISN'T IT?"
"IS THAT REALLY ENOUGH?"
MR. ISHIDA, YOU HAVE TWO MAJOR OPTIONS.
THE FIRST ONE IS TO PRIORITIZE RECEIVING TREATMENT AND STAY IN THE HOSPITAL.
HOWEVER, THERE ARE SERIOUS SIDE-EFFECTS,
AND THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE ONLY RESULT IS TO EXTEND YOUR LIFE BY A FEW YEARS.
THE SECOND OPTION IS TO FOCUS ON PAIN RELIEF MEDICATION,
AND SPEND THE YEARS YOU HAVE DOING WHAT YOU WANT TO DO.

...I THOUGHT ABOUT IT.
BUT DO I HAVE SOMETHING I WANT TO DO...?
I HAVE NO REASON TO EXTEND MY LIFE TO THE POINT OF SUFFERING FROM SIDE-EFFECTS.
BUT AS IT IS,
I SPENT MY WHOLE LIFE WORKING ON BUILDINGS.
...CER-TAINLY,
I LONG FOR A HAPPY LIFE WITH A WIFE AND A FAMILY.
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.
I WANT TO TRULY DEVOTE THE ENTIRETY OF WHAT'S LEFT OF MY LIFE TO CON-STRUCTION.
"THIS TIME I WON'T RUN AWAY.

THANKS TO MASS PRODUCTION, THE PRICE HAS COME DOWN SIGNIFICANTLY.
YES,
WHOA, IS THIS A ROBOT? I CAN'T TELL.
NEXT, WE WILL INTRODUCE...
RRS
THE ERA OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OR RENTING OF ROBOTS HAS ARRIVED.
Nice to meet you
The hand is warm too
ALTHOUGH IT'S A SERVICE FOR RENTING ROBOTS...
ROBOT RENTAL SERVICES, A SPOTLIGHT INDUSTRY.
YES,
THE ROBOTS CAN BE USEFUL TO EVERYONE WHO NEEDS AID, REGARDLESS OF AGE.
THEY CAN BECOME A CONVERSATION PARTNER AND HELP WITH NURSING SINCE THEY ARE STRONG.
I THINK THEY'LL BE GREAT FOR THE ELDERLY WHO LIVE ALONE.
I THINK THEY CAN BE VERY ASSURING PARTNERS.
BUT ALSO TO SUPPORT YOU IN PROACTIVELY DOING WHAT YOU WANT TO DO.
THEY'RE NOT JUST FOR THE SAKE OF HELPING WITH PROBLEMS,

I BELIEVE THAT'S WHAT A ROBOT PARTNER IS FOR.
AND SO I WENT TO THE ROBOT RENTAL SERVICE,
AND MET YOU, NAO.
BUT I DISCARDED THOSE IDEAS.
ALTHOUGH SHORT, IT WAS MY NEW LIFE.
...ONE WHO LOOKED LIKE THE GIRL I DIDN'T CONFESS TO,
OR ONE WHO LOOKED LIKE THE ACTRESS I LIKE...
...AT FIRST, I COULDN'T DECIDE WHAT KIND OF PERSON I WANTED.

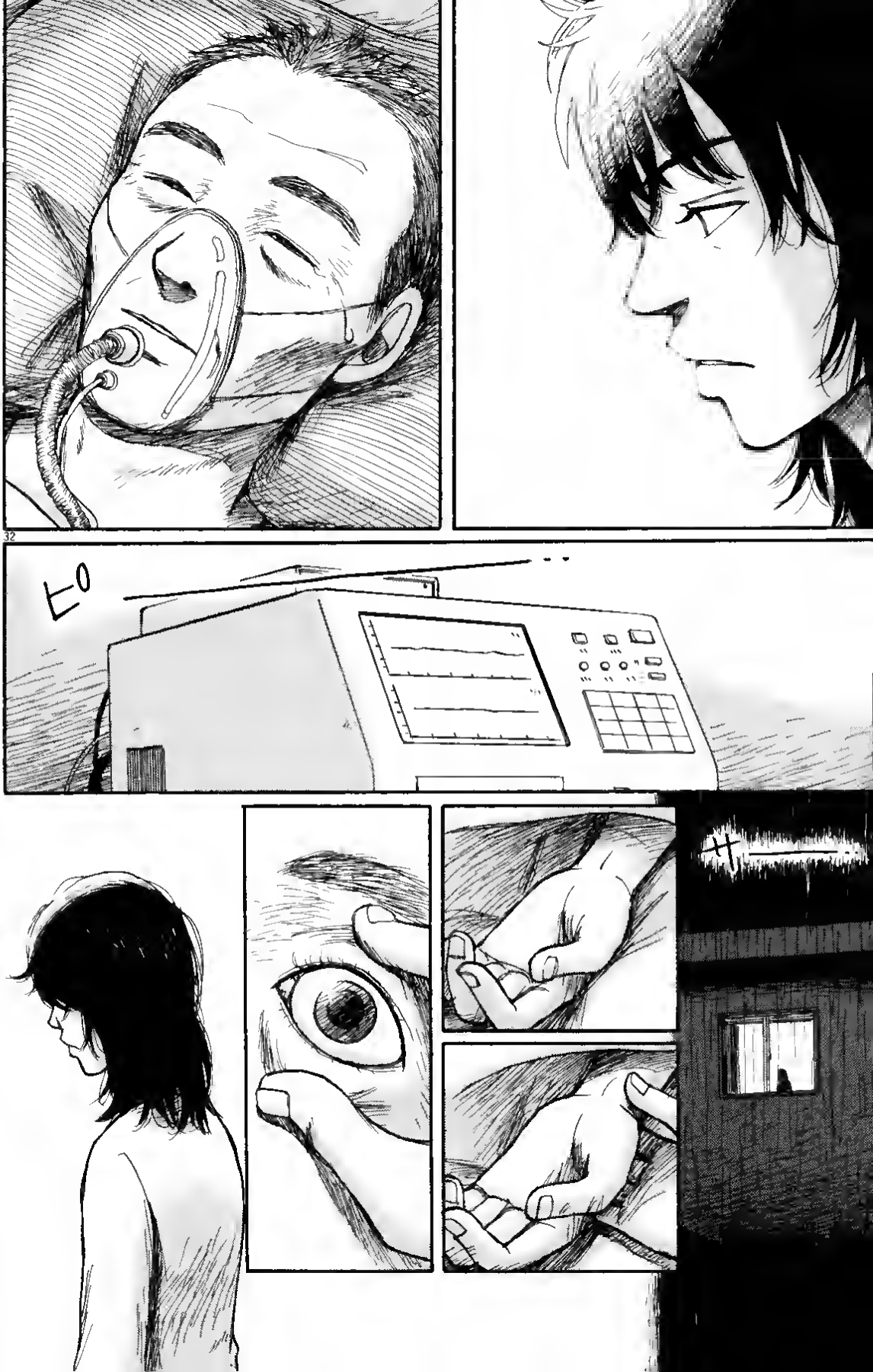
I THOUGHT I SHOULD SPEND MY NEW LIFE
WITH A COMPLETE-LY NEW PERSON.

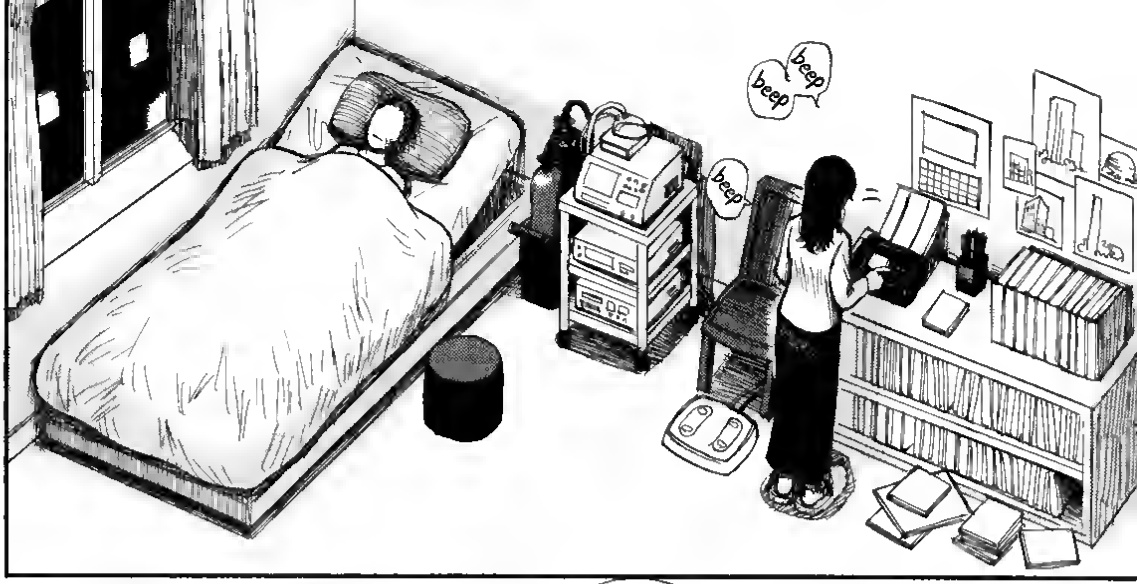
ゴ
ゴ
……
…THE BUILDING IS SUPPOSED TO BE FINISHED TODAY…
YEAH.
BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER ANY-MORE…
I'LL GO TAKE A PICTURE.
IT WON'T TAKE LONG.
NO, IT'S ALL RIGHT…
I COULD PASS AWAY ANYTIME NOW…
I WANT YOU TO BE BY MY SIDE, NAO…
THE TY-PHOON IS AWFUL TOO…
YOU'LL GET SOAKED, NAO…
…I'LL GO ANYWAY.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
ピッ
ピッ
ピッ
……
ガサッ

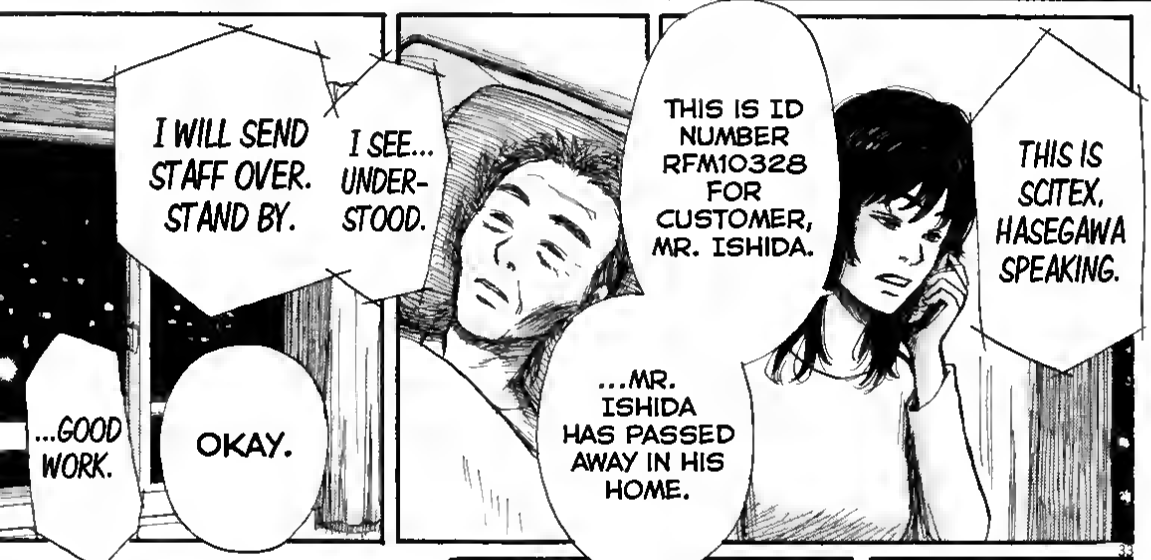
ゴ
...NAO ...!
ゴ
gasp
slam
gasp
ピッ
clak
gasp
ピッ
gasp
ピッ
ピッ
gasp
rustle
THIS IS IT.
I GOT IT ENLARGED AT A LAB.
SORRY FOR TAKING SO LONG.
rustle
gasp
gasp

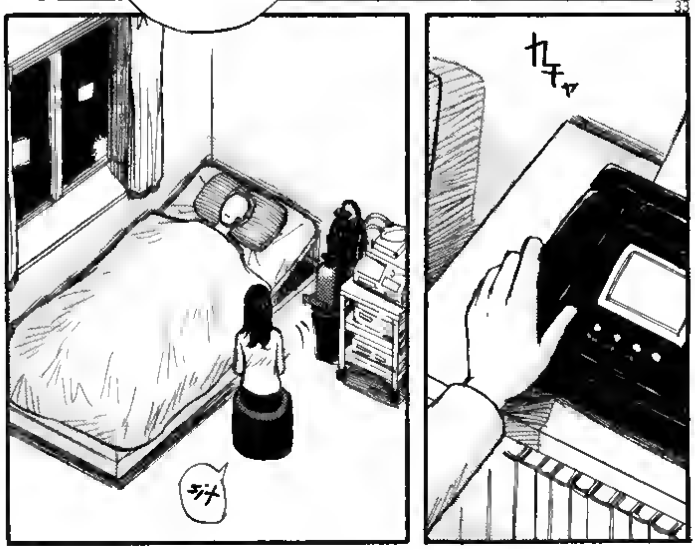
gasp
YEAH ...
THAT'S A FINE BUILDING ...
gasp
A FINE BUILDING INDEED...
gasp
NAO...
YOUR HAND ...
I REALLY WAS...
IMMERSED IN BUILD-INGS UNTIL THE END.
gasp

IN THE FUTURE,
YOU'LL BECOME MORE HUMAN-LIKE, WON'T YOU...?
BUT YOU WERE ENOUGH FOR ME AS YOU ARE NOW.
THANK YOU FOR EVERY-THING...
IT WAS GOOD TO HAVE YOU WITH ME...
...AND THANKS TO THE PEOPLE WHO MADE YOU.
THANK YOU, NAO...
THANK YOU.



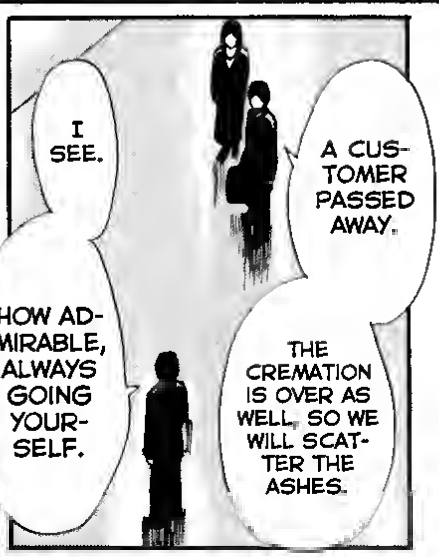

beep
beep
beep


THIS IS SCITEX, HASEGAWA SPEAKING.
THIS IS ID NUMBER RFM10328 FOR CUSTOMER, MR. ISHIDA.
...MR. ISHIDA HAS PASSED AWAY IN HIS HOME.
I SEE... UNDER-STOOD.
I WILL SEND STAFF OVER. STAND BY.
OKAY.
...GOOD WORK.


カチャ

OH, HASEGAWA, ARE YOU GOING OUT WITH A ROBOT TODAY?
YES.

...HE WAS A CUSTOMER OF MINE, AFTER ALL.


I SEE.
A CUSTOMER PASSED AWAY.
HOW ADMIRABLE, ALWAYS GOING YOURSELF.
THE CREMATION IS OVER AS WELL, SO WE WILL SCATTER THE ASHES.

HERE.
THIS IS WHERE HE SAID WANTED HIS ASHES TO BE SCATTERED.
HE SAID IT WAS BECAUSE YOU CAN SEE SCIENTIA TOWER CLEARLY FROM HERE.
IS THAT SO?
WELL, COULD YOU DO THE SCATTERING?
カチャ
THAT WILL BE THE BEST WAY TO MEMORIALIZE HIM.

Final Chapter – Activator

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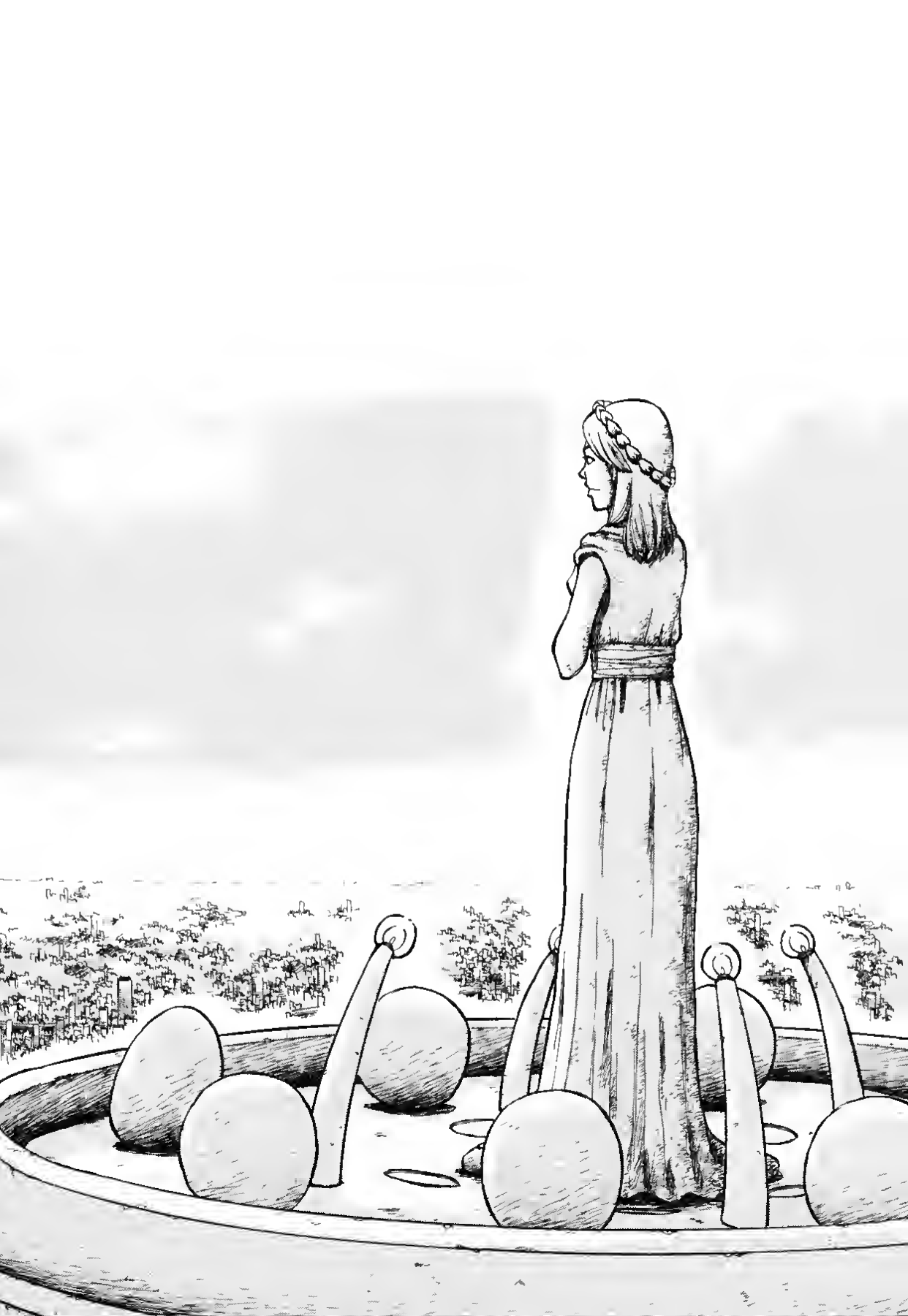


HEY AIZAWA,
YOU CAN GO.
YOU'VE FINISHED FOR THE DAY, HAVEN'T YOU?
RIIIING
bzzz
RIIIIING
YOU'RE PLAYING TOMORROW, RIGHT?
YEAH, GOT A REHEARSAL TODAY.
GOOD LUCK.
THANKS.
YEAH.
SORRY.
HI, IT'S KOBAYASHI.
SORRY, I'VE GOT LOADS OF WORK SO I CAN'T COME SEE YOU PLAY TOMORROW.
OH, THAT'S ALL RIGHT.
...BUT SINCE WE HAVE THE DAY AFTER OFF, CAN I STAY OVER?
YEAH, SURE.
I'LL BE LATE AT THE AFTER PARTY THOUGH.
THAT'S FINE. LATER.
TOMORROW, EH?

LIVE HOUSE
GARAGE
ガレージ
ガヤ
ガヤ
ガヤ
ガヤ
ガヤ
ガヤ
110チ
110チ
110チ
THANK YOU!
PLEASE STAY FOR THEIR SHOW TOO.
THERE'LL BE SOME OTHER GROUPS COMING UP.
シ〜ン...
GOOD JOB.
THANKS. I'M LEAVING THE REST TO YOU.
HA HA,
GOT IT.
WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I SAW YOU AT THE BATTLE OF THE BANDS.

HMM,
WELL, THE USUAL, I GUESS.
I SEE.
ME TOO.
HEY, AIZAWA ...
WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?
ARE YOU GONNA LIVE LIKE THIS FOR-EVER?
HMM ...
ACTUALLY, I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT.
WE'RE ALREADY THIRTY...
AND MY MOTHER'S HEALTH IS GETTING WORSE,
SO I DON'T WANT HER TO WORRY.
IS THAT SO...
AIZA-WA,
I HAVE SOMETHING TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.
I HEARD FROM A FRIEND THAT THERE'S A MACHINE THAT NEEDS TESTERS.
THE MACHINE MAKES YOUR BRAIN TENS OR HUNDREDS OF TIMES MORE ACTIVE.
IF WE WERE TO USE IT, WE'D BE ABLE TO WRITE AMAZING LYRICS AND MELODIES.

YOU SHOULD STOP IT TOO.
I'M NOT GONNA DO ANYTHING DANGER-OUS.
WHAT ELSE COULD I DO, I WASN'T EVEN ABLE TO PAY MY RENT.
...IT'S JUST WHEN I HAVE NO MONEY.
VOLUN-TEERING AS A TEST SUBJECT FOR PILLS AND OTHER DEVICES BEFORE TOO?
WEREN'T YOU...
WOULD YOU COME WITH ME, JUST TO HEAR THEM OUT?
ARE YOU STILL DOING THAT STUFF?
I DON'T HAVE A GIRLFRIEND OR A FAMILY.
IF I CAN'T PLAY MUSIC,
I DON'T CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO ME.
I'M PLANNING TO GO SEE THEM AFTER THE NEXT SHOW.
THINK ABOUT IT FOR ME.

ゴ"
KIND OF FAR AWAY.
WE'LL BE THERE SOON.
SEEMS LIKE THE LAB IS IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY.
bzzt...
bzzt...
OH, DAD?
YEAH, THE SHOW IS DONE, I'M AT THE AFTER PARTY.
PARENTS?
YEP, THEY MAKE A FUSS IF I DON'T PICK UP.
YEAH, I'M EATING WELL.
YEAH, I WON'T STAY OUT TOO LATE.
BYE BYE.
THIS WAY, PLEASE.
GOOD EVENING.

THIS IS THE ROOM.
PLEASE, HAVE A SEAT.
BEFORE TALKING ABOUT THE MACHINE, LET US INTRODUCE OURSELVES.
WE ARE A RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LAB INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN VARIOUS FIELDS.
WE'RE A PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.
THIS MACHINE IS ONE OF THOSE TECHNOLOGIES.
IT'S STILL UNDER DEVELOPMENT,
SO WHAT YOU TWO WILL SEE AND HEAR TODAY IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.
JUST TO BE SAFE, PLEASE SIGN THESE NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS.
NOW LET ME BEGIN THE EXPLANATION.

IS THAT IT ACTIVATES THE SLEEPING PARTS OF THE BRAIN AND ALLOWS YOU TO USE THEM EFFICIENTLY.
A SIMPLE EXPLANATION OF WHAT THIS MACHINE DOES...
WE ONLY PUT ONE PART OF OUR BRAINS TO REAL EFFECTIVE USE.
IT COULD BE SAID THAT NORMALLY,
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF HUMANS USED THE MACHINE...?
NOTABLY, WITH CHIMPANZEES, THEY WERE ABLE TO REACH A REMARKABLE LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION WITH HUMANS.
SO FAR WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY USED THE MACHINE ON MICE, CATS, DOGS AND CHIMPANZEES.
OR THEY COULD FIND NEW SOURCES OF ENERGY TO REPLACE OIL AND NUCLEAR POWER...
PERHAPS THEY WOULD BE ONE STEP CLOSER TO BEING GODS.
...I BELIEVE THAT, JUST LIKE A GOD,
THAT PERSON WOULD BE ABLE TO GRASP THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN EVERYTHING.
AND HOW THOSE PROBLEMS COULD BE AVOIDED OR CONTROLLED...
THEY WOULD KNOW WHAT KINDS OF PROBLEMS THAT WOULD CAUSE IN OTHER COUNTRIES.
FOR EXAMPLE, IF THERE WAS TROUBLE IN ONE COUNTRY,

IN YOUR CASES,
YOU'D BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE INNER WORKINGS OF HUMAN EMOTIONS,
CREATE GROUND BREAK-ING,
RADICAL MUSIC, OR SONGS GUARANTEED TO BECOME HITS.
BASED ON THE KNOWL-EDGE WE HAVE OB-TAINED,
THE WAY BRAINS OF PAST GENIUSES WORKED...
IS VERY SIMILAR TO THE RESULTS ACHIEVED BY USING THIS MACHINE.
...HOW-EVER,
THERE'S ONE PROB-LEM WITH THE MA-CHINE.
YOUR LIFESPAN WILL BE CUT RE-MARKABLY SHORT.
IT'S MOST LIKELY BECAUSE THE MACHINE PUTS EXTRAORDI-NARY STRAIN ON YOUR NERV-OUS SYSTEM AND MUSCLES.
A HUMAN WOULD MOST LIKELY DIE WITHIN SEVEN TO EIGHT YEARS AFTER USING THE MACHINE.
...IT ALL DEPENDS ON HOW YOU LOOK AT IT.
YOUR LIFE WILL BE FULL, RICH AND SHORT,

AND YOU'LL HAVE AN UNUSUALLY HIGH CHANCE OF MAKING A LASTING IMPACT ON THE WORLD.
...WE WILL NOT RESTRAIN YOUR BEHAVIOR IN ANY WAY.
WE WILL PLANT A TRANSMITTER IN YOUR BODY,
AND UNILATERALLY COLLECT DATA.
OF COURSE, WE WILL ALSO GIVE YOU GENEROUS FINANCIAL SUPPORT.
PLEASE CONSIDER IT.
WELCOME HOME.
SORRY TO INTRUDE WHEN YOU'RE TIRED.
NO, THAT'S FINE.
ARE YOU HUNGRY?
SHALL I MAKE SOMETHING LIGHT?
YEAH,
SURE.

ジャッ
ジャッ
ジャ
ジャッ
AIZA-WA,
I THINK I'LL DO IT.
DON'T! IT'S NOT WORTH IT.
THERE'S NO GUARANTEE IT'LL EVEN WORK.
EVEN IF IT DOES, YOU'D ONLY LIVE FOR SEVEN OR EIGHT YEARS...
IF I CAN BE A SELLING MUSICIAN, IT'LL BE WORTH IT.
ANYHOW, I CAN'T STAND THE WAY I AM NOW. I'M NOT TURNING ANY HEADS.
I CAN'T SEE A FUTURE LIKE THIS.
MY PARENTS ABANDONED ME AND DIS-APPEARED,
AND THEN MY RELATIVES PASSED ME AROUND. I'VE TOLD YOU ABOUT IT ALL BEFORE.
...EVER SINCE THEN, I HAVEN'T BEEN NORMAL...
I CAN'T CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN MYSELF AND OTHER PEOPLE WELL.
THAT'S WHY I CAN'T KEEP A JOB FOR LONG.
IF I DIDN'T HAVE MUSIC I'D GO EVEN MORE CRAZY.

I WANT TO GET BACK AT THE PEOPLE WHO ABANDONED ME.
BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I WANT THEM TO ACKNOWLEDGE ME...
AND PRAISE ME.
SORRY...
IT'S ALL RIGHT...
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO HANGS AROUND ME.
...THAT'S RIGHT.
THE FIRST TIME I SAW HIM AT THE BATTLE OF THE BANDS,
I WAS ATTRACTED TO THAT HUNGER OF HIS.
You played well
Thanks
NEITHER HIS PLAYING OR SINGING WERE PARTICULARLY GOOD.
AT FIRST, I THOUGHT HE WAS JUST ONE OF THOSE GUYS WHO CRAVED THE LIMELIGHT.

IT FELT SORT OF LIKE HE HAD THE RIGHT TO PLAY MUSIC...
THIS GUY'S SONG IS SORT OF...
SCARY.
AND IF HE BROKE THROUGH, THERE'D BE NO WAY FOR ME TO MAKE IT.
BUT AFTER HEARING ABOUT HOW HE GREW UP,
I WAS A BIT JEALOUS.
...I'M SO TIRED.
THIS MONTH HAS BEEN ROUGH...
I HAVE SO MANY GIGS, TOO...
...I WONDER IF I'M GETTING OLD. I FEEL LIKE I CAN'T JUST SHRUG IT OFF ANYMORE.
I HAVE TO MAKE A SONG FOR THE NEXT AUDITION.
...I CAN'T SLEEP.
thud

THAT GUY NEVER PICKS UP...
beep
HE DOESN'T RETURN MESSAGES EITHER.
Tajima
090XXXXXXX
RiiiiiiNG
beep
.....
Phew
THE PERSON YOU CALLED IS CURRENTLY UNAVAILABLE...
WE'RE SORRY...
RiiiiiiNG
click
ゴ
DID HE REALLY USE THAT DEVICE...
SO MUCH MONEY SPENT ON ALL THESE ADVERTISEMENTS.
Debut
Time
10.6
Debut
REALLY? I'LL CHECK IT OUT.
HE'LL BE ON TV TODAY.
WHO'S THAT?
ゴ
Debut
TAJIMA
YUKITO
10.6

...WAS THE MACHINE FOR REAL?
...DID HE USE IT?
THAT ALBUM WILL SELL FOR SURE.
...IT'LL SELL.

AUDITION
会場
OKAY, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
WE'LL SEND YOU THE RESULTS IN A FEW DAYS.
THAT WAS NO GOOD.
THE LOOKS ON THEIR FACES WHILE THEY WERE LISTENING WEREN'T GOOD.
RIIIIIIING
RIIIIIIING

ARE YOU EATING PROPERLY?
HOW ARE YOU DOING?
YEAH!
...I'M DOING MY BEST!
YES?
YEAH, WHAT!?
HEY, IT'S DAD.
18
YOU REMEMBER YOUR COUSIN TAKASHI'S FUNERAL, RIGHT?
DON'T BE SO TENSE.
YEAH...
I'M NOT OBJECTING LIKE I USED TO.
YEAH...
HER CONDITION ISN'T THAT GOOD. SHE'S ALREADY SLEEPING AGAIN.
AL-THOUGH YOUR MOM WON'T SAY ANYTHING,
SO I THOUGHT YOU SHOULD DO WHAT YOU LIKE.
IN HIS CASE, IT WAS A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT,
BUT YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT'LL HAPPEN IN LIFE.
JUST MAKE YOUR DEBUT SOON TO GIVE HER SOME PEACE OF MIND.
THAT'S THE WORST THING YOU COULD DO.
BUT DON'T DIE BEFORE YOUR PARENTS.

5th Album
TAJIMA YUKITO
9.16 OUT
IT'S AS-TOUNDING!
MUSIC Time
田島
J-POP
YOU'RE ANNOUNCING ALBUMS AT AN AMAZING SPEED,
AND YET EACH ONE COULD BE A GREATEST HITS COL-LECTION!
THANK YOU.
I'M PLANNING TO RELEASE AT A PACE OF FOUR OR FIVE ALBUMS A YEAR.
FOUR OR FIVE!
ARE YOU PLANNING TO TOUR?
NOT YET. I'M CURRENTLY FOCUSING ON WRITING SONGS.
AFTER FOUR OR FIVE YEARS, WITH ALL OF MY ALBUMS FINISHED,
I'LL BEGIN A LARGE-SCALE TOUR.
PLEASE LOOK FORWARD TO THAT.

SLAM
IT'S NO GOOD, DAMMIT!
scribble scribble
Milkerine
BE-SIDES,
DON'T DIE BE-FORE YOUR PAR-ENTS.
I CAN'T USE A MACHINE LIKE THAT!
BUT WHAT CAN I DO!?
BACK IN THE UNIVERSITY MUSIC CLUB, YOU DIDN'T CARE MUCH FOR ME.
OH, YOU NOTICED? YEAH.
BY THE WAY, HOW COME YOU STARTED FANCYING ME ALL OF A SUDDEN?
THERE'S KOBA-YASHI...

IT'S BECAUSE YOU HAD THIS "I'M SO AWESOME" AIR ABOUT YOU BACK THEN.
YOU SURE ARE STRAIGHT-FORWARD.
YOU'RE THE TYPE, WHO WAS BROUGHT UP AND PRAISED BY A KIND MOTHER AND GOT COCKY.
WELL, MAYBE MUSICIANS NEED TO BE LIKE THAT,
BUT YOU DIDN'T HAVE THE SKILL FOR IT.
...SHE'S RIGHT TOO.
BUT WHILE EVERYONE WAS AIMING TO BE AN OFFICE WORKER,
YOU WANTED TO GO PRO.
HONESTLY, I THOUGHT YOU'D GIVE UP STRAIGHT AWAY.
BUT IT'S ALREADY BEEN EIGHT YEARS. I THINK YOU HAVE SPIRIT.
THE POINT IS, I'M HERE TO WATCH YOU TRY TO FIGURE OUT IF YOU HAVE REAL TALENT OR NOT,
AND RELAX WITH SOME BEER ONCE IN A WHILE.
CHEERS!
WE CAN BOTH WORK HARD TOGETHER.
IS THAT YOUR WAY OF CHEER-ING ME ON...?
BUT, SHE'S ALWAYS HAD MY BACK,

EVEN WHEN MY PERFORM-ANCES OR AUDITIONS DIDN'T GO SO WELL,
AND I WANTED TO CLING TO SOME-THING, SHE WAS THERE FOR ME.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
JUST TAKE IT EASY TODAY.
OKAY?
SHE'S THIRTY JUST LIKE ME.
SHE MIGHT BE THINK-ING ABOUT GETTING MARRIED.
IF I JUST GAVE UP MUSIC,
EVERY-THING WOULD BE FINE.
I COULD BECOME AN OFFICE WORKER, MARRY KOBAYASHI AND GIVE MY PARENTS PEACE OF MIND.

TA-
JIMA
...
HE DEFINITELY WOULDN'T BE THINK-ING ABOUT STUFF LIKE THIS.
HE ONLY THINKS OF MUSIC.
HE'S NOT EVEN AFRAID OF DYING.
DAMMIT, THIS IS PATHETIC.
I'LL PUT MY EVERY-THING INTO THE NEXT SONG.
THE NEXT AUDITION IS A BIG ONE.
THIS SONG WILL BE MY LAST STAND.
IT WILL DECIDE IT ALL.
.....
ジャーン
スー…
23

Auditions
24
THIS IS JUST MY OPINION, BUT...
...I DO!
...DO YOU HAVE CONFI-DENCE IN YOUR SONG?
...THANK YOU.

ALTHOUGH SOMETIMES PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT,
I HAVE TO SAY THAT YOUR CHOICE OF WORDS IS NOTHING SPECIAL.
SPECIFICALLY, I COULDN'T FEEL ANY MUSICAL TASTE.
TO PUT IT BLUNTLY, IF YOU'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOR EIGHT YEARS, YOU SHOULD QUIT.
ONE OF THE PARTICULAR QUALITIES OF THIS AUDITION IS THAT WE'RE BLUNT.
AFTER ALL, THE CRUELEST OF ALL THINGS IS TO BE VAGUE AND LET SOMEONE WASTE THEIR LIFE.
YOU'RE THIRTY, RIGHT?
YOU'RE ENERGETIC AND WILL MAKE A GOOD FATHER.
YOU CAN JUST APPROACH MUSIC AS A HOBBY.
THERE IS NO SHAME IN THAT.
THEN AGAIN, SOME PEOPLE REFUSE TO GIVE UP.
...IF YOU STILL WANT TO CONTINUE,
PLEASE KEEP COMING TO AUDITIONS, HERE OR ELSEWHERE.

GOD DAMN IT!
ガ"
"PLEASE KEEP COMING", MY ASS!
YOU MIGHT GET PAID FOR SAYING THAT, BUT FOR ME,
THOSE WORDS MEAN MORE WORK AND MORE SONGS TO WRITE!
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME!
RIIIIING
ビクッ
RIIIIING
Kobayashi
...THIS IS IT...
I CAN'T MAKE ANYTHING BETTER THAN THAT AS I AM NOW...
.....
ガクッ

CLICK
...HI, IT'S ME, KOBA-YASHI.
I WAS WONDERING IF IT'D BE POSSIBLE TO MEET UP TODAY.
...BUT IF YOU'RE BUSY...
...KOBA-YASHI.
OH, AIZAWA?
WHAT'S WRONG? YOUR VOICE...
I MADE UP MY MIND, THAT TODAY'S AUDITION WOULD DECIDE IT.
EH?
I SEE...
I...
I'M GIVING UP ON GOING PRO TODAY..
I THINK YOU DID ALL YOU COULD.
UUUU...
I RESPECT THAT.
UUU...
SAYING IT'S A MATTER OF TALENT,
OR THAT IT'S FOR MY PAR-ENTS OR MY GIRL-FRIEND... THAT'S ALL EXCUSES.

I JUST COULDN'T STAND THE PAIN OF CARRYING ON.
pat
HEY,
LET'S GO EAT LUNCH.
IT'S NOON.
PLEASE TURN OFF UNNECES-SARY LIGHTS.
click
click click
I TOLD YOU, YOU CAN TAKE IT A BIT EASIER AT FIRST.
I HAVEN'T GOTTEN USED TO THINGS YET.
28
I HAD A KID AND ALL.
ACTUALLY, I JUST GAVE UP BECOMING A PRO TOO.
SO I HEARD FROM THE CHIEF...
THAT YOU USED TO PLAY MUSIC?
OUR COMPANY HAS A MUSIC CLUB, I PLAY THERE TOO.
YOU SHOULD JOIN. IT'D BE A GREAT HELP.
UM, SURE.
REALLY ...?
.....

OH, SORRY.
HEY, LET'S GO!
……
ゴー——
ゴooo…
11th Album
TAJIMA YUKITO
6.17
UH, NO…
DO YOU HAVE SOME-THING ON YOUR MIND? MUSIC?
AI-ZAWA,
THERE ARE THINGS THAT YOU CAN COME TO UNDERSTAND BY WORKING TOGETHER.
IT'S NOT A BAD LIFE TO PLAY MUSIC WHILE WORKING AT THE OFFICE.
カラ…ン
カラ…ン
YEAH… I THINK EVERYONE'S GOT ALL SORTS OF THINGS ON THEIR MINDS WHEN THEY'RE WORKING.

NOT AT ALL,
THAT'S HOW KIDS ARE. HOW'S MIDORI DOING?
SUZUKI, SORRY FOR TROUBLING YOU ALL THE TIME.
SUZUKI, AIZAWA,
THANKS FOR TAKING CARE OF MY TASKS.
AND FOR FOR HELPING ME OUT WHEN MY CHILD WASN'T WELL.
I'LL COME WITH MOM TO SEE YOU PLAY AGAIN.
MR. SUZUKI, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
OH!
SHE'S A LOT BETTER.
HERE, THIS IS FROM HER.
HE'S GOOD. I'LL LEND YOU A CD OF HIS.
EH?
NO, NOT REALLY.
AIZAWA, DO YOU LISTEN TO TAJIMA YUKITO?
HE PROBABLY UNDER-STANDS THE PAINS THAT ALL SORTS OF PEOPLE GO THROUGH FROM THAT.
...IT SEEMS LIKE HE HAD A ROUGH PAST.

ガタン ゴ
ガタン
ガタン ガタン
ガタン
ALSO SONGS FOR OFFICE WORKERS.
THEY'RE REALLY PIERCING.
CHILDREN, THE ELDERLY, MOTHERS...
HE MAKES SONGS FOR ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE.
ガタン
...YOU'RE WORKING REALLY HARD TOO, AREN'T YOU?
HE MUST BE RAKING IT IN.
YEAH.
BUT YOU'VE LOST A LOT OF WEIGHT.
YOU'RE HIDING IT UNDER THE MAKE-UP,
HE REALLY MAKES SONGS AT SUCH A FAST PACE.
ホギャ
ホギャー ホギャ
ホギャ
ホギャ
CONGRA-TULATIONS!
ホギャ
Yoshida Hospital
YOU BOTH ARE.
SHE'S BEAUTI-FUL.

IT WAS AMAZING. I WAS CARRIED AWAY IMMEDIATELY.
A TOUR OF UNPRECEDENTED SCALE HAS STARTED.
FROM LARGE CONCERT HALLS TO SMALL CLUBS,
EVERY CORNER OF THE COUNTRY WILL BE COVERED.
I'M GOING TO FOLLOW HIM THROUGH THE WHOLE TOUR!
I GUESS SHE FORGOT.
YUKA SAW TAJIMA PLAY TOO...
clatter
AH, OH NO!
WOW, AMAZING.
32
パキン
Tajima
WELL, WHO WOULD'VE THOUGHT HE'D GO THIS FAR...
TOWEL, TOWEL...
RRRING
RRRRRING

Frm Tajima
Sorry to contact suddenly. How are you? I'm touring now and will come back here in the end. I don't have much time, but if possible I want to meet. Please.
AIZA-WA!
TAJI-MA...
LONG TIME NO SEE.
HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?

OKAY...
I'VE BEEN LISTEN-ING TO YOUR SONGS.
YOU'VE ...
GOT A KID OF YOUR OWN, HUH?
YEAH. CAN YOU TELL?
I CAN. YOUR FACE LOOKS GOOD.
AIZAWA... YOU'RE A GOOD MAN.
YOU GAVE UP BECOM-ING A PRO
AND GOT A PROPER JOB...
AIZAWA, I CAN WRITE SONGS,
BUT I ONLY UNDERSTAND THEM IN MY HEAD.
BUT YOU'RE DIFFERENT.

LISTEN,
EVERY SINGLE PART OF YOUR LIFE IS CONNECTED TO THE REST OF THE WORLD IN SOME WAY.
REALLY.
SO TAKE CARE OF EACH PIECE.
THEY'LL COME BACK TO YOU FOR SURE.
35
THIS IS A TICKET FOR THE LAST DAY OF THE TOUR.
COME IF YOU CAN.
I THINK THIS IS THE LAST TIME WE'LL MEET.
HEY, ISN'T THAT ...
TAJIMA YUKITO?
EH, NO WAY!
SEE YOU.
LIVE LONG.

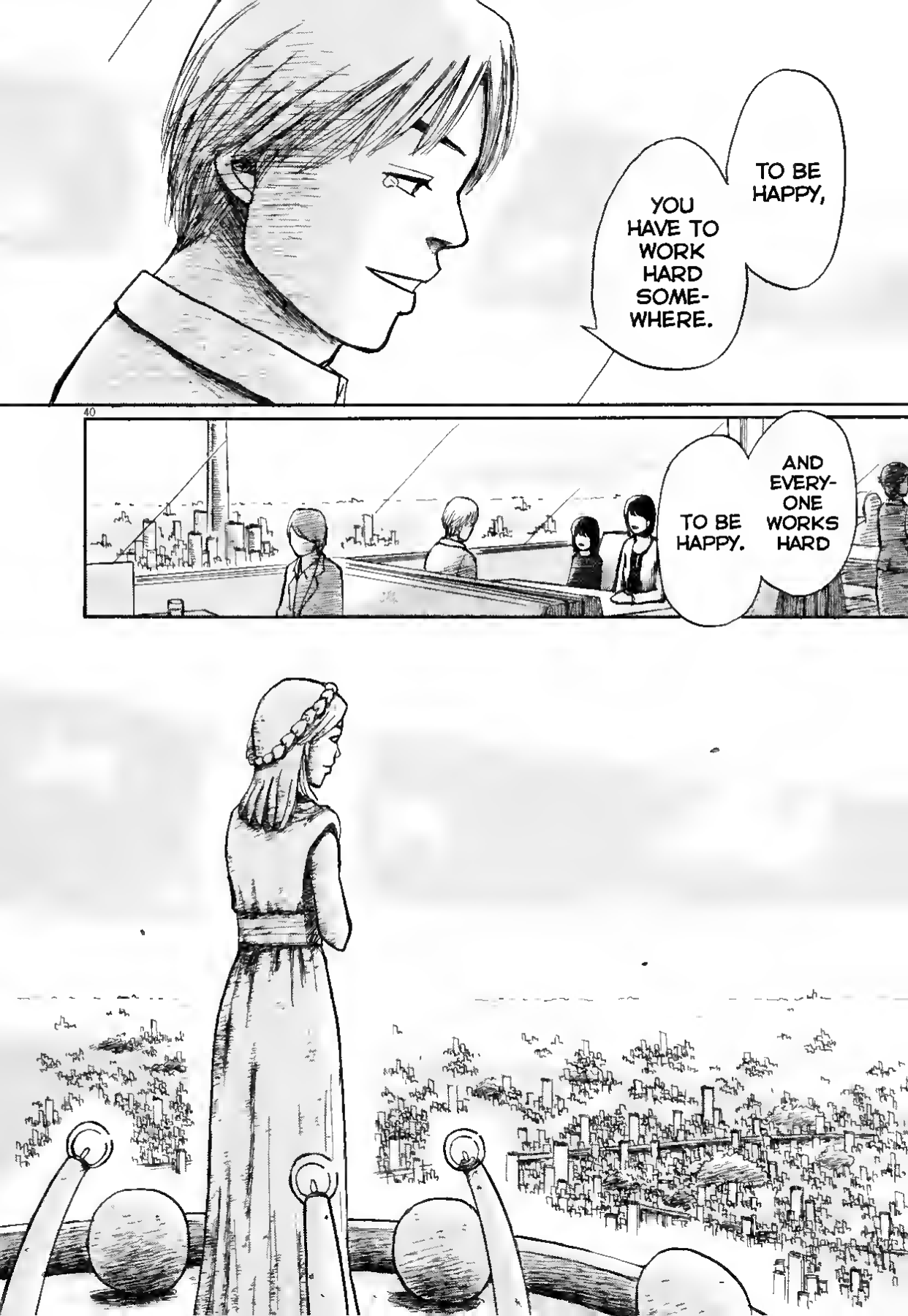
...TA-
JIMA.

I COULDN'T HAVE MADE SONGS LIKE THESE EVEN IF I HAD USED THE MACHINE.
WHEN YOUR MUSIC FIRST STARTED SELLING, I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST THANKS TO THE MACHINE.
...IT WAS ONLY POSSIBLE,
BE-
CAUSE
IT'S
YOU.
BUT NOW I KNOW THAT ISN'T TRUE.

DOME

ゴ"
TAJIMA YUKITO
MEMORIAL VIDEO CONCERT
38
ゴ"
ゴ"
TAJIMA YUKITO
MEMORIAL VIDEO CONCERT
WHERE SHOULD WE GO?
THERE'S A NEW FAMILY RESTAU-RANT IN THE L TOWER.
LET'S EAT THERE.
YOU CAN SEE THE SCIENTIA TOWER WELL FROM THERE.
DADDY, I'M HUNGRY.
ME TOO, LET'S GO EAT.
ゴ"

WOW!
HEY, DADDY?
WHAT'S THAT ON THE TOP?
EH?
OH..
THAT'S THE STATUE OF THE GODDESS OF SCIENCE.
"SCIENTIA".
THAT'S THE NAME OF THE GODDESS.
SAIENSE?
YEAH... I GUESS I'M NOT VERY GOOD AT EXPLAINING IT.
BUT, THANKS TO SCIENCE, OUR LIFE IS SO CONVENIENT NOW.
WE CAN EVEN DO THINGS THAT LOOK LIKE MAGIC.
...BUT, THEY AREN'T ACTUALLY MAGICAL.


TO BE HAPPY,
YOU HAVE TO WORK HARD SOME-WHERE.
40
AND EVERY-ONE WORKS HARD
TO BE HAPPY.

Scientia End

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